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ABSTRACT

This document is a compilation of 74 items that were written by Ohio adult basic and literacy education students and presented at the Sixth Annual Ohio Writers' Conference. The compilation is organized in seven sections titled as follows: (1) "Beautiful Ohio: Visions of What Used to Be" (7 poems and essays commemorating famous historical figures and events); (2) "Beautiful Ohio: This Majestic Land" (12 poems and essays by Ohio natives and immigrants); (3) "Beautiful Ohio: Land Where My Dreams All Come True" (8 essays and poems by individuals who have moved to Ohio from other parts of the Untied States and abroad); (4) "Issues and Attitudes" (13 essays and poems on a wide range of topics, including meeting the needs of Ohio's students, violence, drug use, attitudes toward the homeless, and hiding from dyslexia); (5) "Personal Reflections" (14 reflections on topics ranging from having a bad day to losing close friends in a drag race); (6) "Family" (10 essays and poems expressing attitudes toward family and recalling specific family members); and (7) "Love and Inspiration" (10 poems and essays exploring the meaning of love and recounting experiences of being in love). Biographies of the authors and a list of honorable mention authors whose works were not included in the compilation are also presented. (MN)

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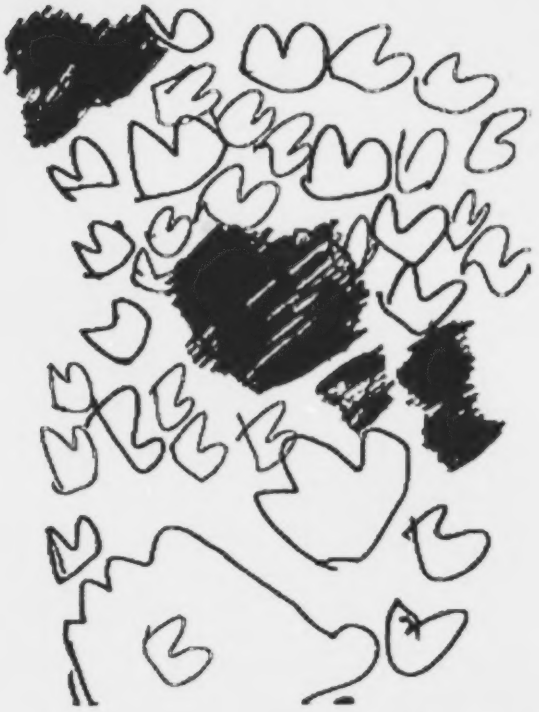

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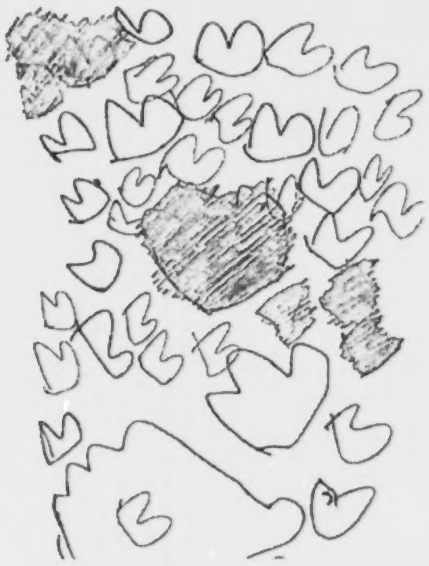

A publication of adult student writing of the
2003 Ohio Writers' Conference

Table of Contents

The Ohio Literacy Resource Center
May 16, 2003

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Children of adults who participate in literacy programs improve their grades and test scores, improve their reading skills, and are less likely to drop out. (NIFL Fast Facts on Literacy)

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Foreword

People who *know* often *write* about what they *know*. They sometimes write about their lives; their histories; their experiences; or their memories through diaries, letters, or scattered notes left on bedside tables.

In this 6th edition of *Beginnings*, you will meet people who *know*. You will meet adult students who wrote about their lives, their histories, their experiences, their memories. In addition, this year students were encouraged to reflect on Ohio's rich history and culture in honor of Ohio's Bicentennial. The first three sections of this book offer a variety of well-written pieces that focus on Ohio in unique ways. As we celebrate Ohio's rich culture and diversity, another special feature of this year's edition is the inclusion of artwork submitted by adults with developmental disabilities from the Youngstown ABLE Workplace Literacy site, MASCO. We hope you enjoy and appreciate their creative contributions!

The authors of *Beginnings VI* and their teachers were honored during the 6th Annual Writers' Conference sponsored by the OLRC in the spring of 2003 at the Wyndham Dublin Hotel in Columbus. The participants engaged in dynamic presentations by authors Francis Kazemek and Judy Hendershot, as well as storyteller Lyn Ford, that featured preserving our past and present.

In addition, we recognize the talents of the students who are not included in this book. They are listed in the *Honorable Mention* section and we thank them for their creative submissions and encourage them to continue their fine attempts to craft entries for next year's conference. We

celebrate *all* ABLE authors in this 6th edition of *Beginnings* and thank their teachers for supporting their creative writing abilities.

The OLRC acknowledges and thanks the Ohio Department of Education - Adult Basic and Literacy Education Office, particularly State Director Denise Pottmeyer, for its continued financial support for this project. In addition, we thank the following readers who dedicated many hours judging the nearly 300 submissions: Dianna Baycich, Judy Hendershot, Bill Kist, Lisa Lenhart, Chris McKeon, Nancy Padak, Connie Sapin, Dale Sherman, and Lori Siffert.

Now, sit back, read, and enjoy this 6th edition that begins with a tribute to Ohio!

The journey is everything! ~ *Willa Cather*

Happy Birthday, Ohio!

Chris McKeon
2003 Conference Organizer

Ohio State Song

Beautiful Ohio

Written by Ballard McDonald
Special lyrics by Wilbert B. McBride
Composed by Mary Earl

I sailed away;
Wandered afar;
Crossed the mighty restless sea;
Looked for where I ought to be.
Cities so grand, mountains above,
Led to this land I love.

Chorus

Beautiful Ohio, where the golden grain
Dwarf the lovely flowers in the summer rain.
Cities rising high, silhouette the sky.
Freedom is supreme in this majestic land;
Mighty factories seem to hum in tune, so grand.
Beautiful Ohio, thy wonders are in view,
Land where my dreams all come true!

Artwork created by Paula Voytilla

Table of Contents

Foreword	iii
Beautiful Ohio: Visions of What Used to Be	1
Beautiful Ohio: This Majestic Land	15
Beautiful Ohio: Land Where My Dreams All Come True	37
Issues and Attitudes	51
Personal Reflections	73
Family	95
Love and Inspiration	117
Biographies of Authors	141
List of Honorable Mention Authors	151

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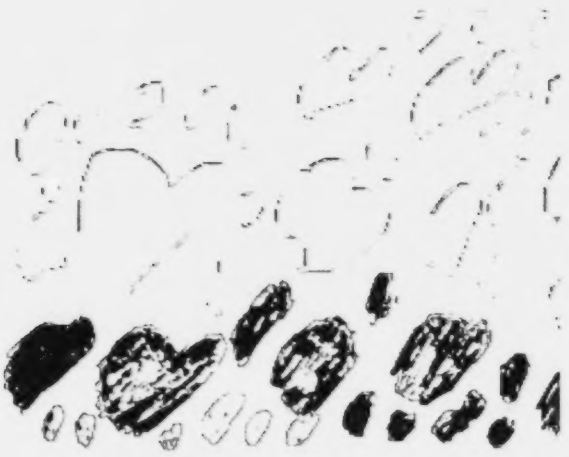
Beautiful Ohio: Visions of What Used to Be



Artwork created by Anthony Pesce

TECUMSEH

Tecumseh was a brave, courageous warrior of the Shawnee Indian tribe

Encouraged his people to return to traditional ways, cultivate their land, and avoid liquor

Courageously and fiercely fought the white men that were taking over the land

Used his ability to prophesy in his quest for unity of the tribes

Master tactician, great speaker, charismatic

Shawnee chief, admired by many, not just the Indians

Experienced many battles fighting for his beliefs

He believed the land belonged to everyone and the sale of land invalid unless all agreed

Carol Rudder

THE FINAL BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE
(Excerpt from John Adams's Diary, Sept. 15, 1813)

It was a cold and gray day.
Freezing water, ships everywhere.
No time for peace or questions.

My leader said to blockade the British fleet.
With only nine ships we did.
The British fired.
Our ships were outnumbered.

Oliver Perry, our leader,
Was jumping from ship to ship.
Finally he said,
"We have met the enemy, and they are ours."
With those powerful words
We win the battle.

William Gordon

A BOY'S MEMORIES OF DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND

I remember when I was a little boy my mother would take me downtown with her every Saturday. I looked forward to Saturdays. It was like a holiday to me. Downtown Cleveland had department stores from Public Square all the way up to 14th St. and what is now called Playhouse Square.

I remember my mother doing her shopping in the department stores, and we would always have our lunch at Kresge's 5-and-10 store before heading back home.

When Christmas holidays came, my mother would always take me to May Company department store for me to see Santa. Santa would ask me if I had been a good little boy. I would always answer him with a yes, although I might have been spanked by my mother the day before.

I remember other good times in downtown Cleveland. My father would take me to sporting events at the Cleveland Stadium. Cleveland had only one stadium at that time for baseball and football games. I thought that Cleveland had the best tasting hot dogs at the stadium. I was able to see some great baseball and football players. Cleveland also had Cleveland Arena down about 30th St. and Euclid Avenue for other sporting events.

I also remember having good times at the Public Auditorium. My father would take me to concerts to see Jazz at the Philharmonic. I was also able to see some great musicians like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, among others. Today, jazz is still my choice of music.

Those were some happy days that I can remember about downtown Cleveland, and I am thankful for them.

Conrel Penland

RIPLEY, OHIO, HISTORICAL RIVER TOWN

Ripley, Ohio, was founded in 1812 on the banks of the Ohio River, located on State Route 52, approximately 50 miles east of Cincinnati. Ripley is well known for its many historical sites, which include the Rankin House, Carolyn's Miniature Museum, and the Ripley Museum.

A visit to Ripley is like a step back in time, a simpler time, free from the hustle and bustle of modern-day living. We begin our trip with a visit to Ripley's most prominent historical attraction, the Rankin House.

Located on Liberty Hill, it overlooks the Ohio River and the town of Ripley. The house takes its name from the Reverend John Rankin, who was very prominent in the antislavery movement at the time. The Reverend Rankin and his family moved into the house in 1822. The house was a stop on the Underground Railroad, used as a rest stop by many desperate slaves fleeing the South to freedom in the North. A candle was left burning in a window as an "all clear" signal to runaways waiting on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River. Getting the "all clear" signal, they would be rowed across the river in rowboats. This would bring them to Front Street, where many of the "conductors" on the Underground Railroad resided. From Front Street they would climb the 100 steps to the Rankin House. This staircase of steps runs the entire length of the hill. The house is open during the summer months for tours.

Next on our list of sites to see is Carolyn's Mini Rooms Museum. Here you can stroll through a general store, blacksmith shop, 50's garage, Barbra Streisand's living room, or dine in a Japanese restaurant, all in miniature. Carolyn Arp made these unique miniature rooms. Many years and thousands of hours went into the making of these miniature

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treasures from common everyday items, including using an ashtray as a reflecting pool. There is much to see at Carolyn's Museum.

Another intriguing place of interest that we visited in this quiet town was the Ripley Museum, which is housed in a Federal style house built in 1837. It features 10 rooms, each representing a different event or period in the history of Ripley.

The John P. Parker House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. John P. Parker was an ex-slave who moved to Ripley in 1848 from Cincinnati. He founded a blacksmith and foundry business in Ripley, while helping slaves escape the South through the Underground Railroad.

Ripley and the surrounding area is also well known for its covered bridges. Ripley has two, which were built in the early 1900's. A highlight of the year in Ripley is its annual Tobacco Festival, which draws visitors from near and far. This festival was started in 1982 to recognize the tobacco-growing families in the surrounding areas. Some of the events at the Festival include a tobacco spitting contest, a tobacco stripping contest, an antique car show, clogging contests, live music, and lots of good food.

If you visit Ripley during the winter months, you can join the local residents at the high school for a bluegrass show. These shows are held once a month during October through April, featuring some of the best touring groups in the bluegrass genre, including J. D. Crowe, Nothin' Fancy & The Gary Waldrep Band who travel all the way from Alabama. This type of music fits in perfectly with the atmosphere of Ripley. The shows are attended by both young and old, a real melting pot of the community. The school Spanish class, as a fundraiser, provides refreshments and food. These shows

were playing to a packed house long before the recent upsurge in the popularity of bluegrass music.

You can get into the mood for your step back in time long before you get to the Ripley city limits. Just tune your radio to WAOL-FM 99.5. This Ripley-based station plays nothing but Classic Country and a limited amount of Bluegrass music 24/7. Roy Acuff, Johnny Cash, Buck Owens and all your favorites come alive again at the touch of your radio dial. It's a perfect companion on your way to a step back in history, to another time and place.

If you are looking for a getaway for a weekend, a place to slow down from the everyday rat race, to reflect on the past, to be at peace with the world for a while, I sincerely recommend Ripley, Ohio.

Vickie A. Hargraves

THE DREAM

Ohio is turning two hundred years old this year. As I look back in our rich history I think of all the men and women that made our great state what it is today. When I turn the pages of the history book I stop in the 1900's where I see two brothers that had a dream like most of us. Their dream was to fly. Everyone said that if God wanted us to fly, he would have given us wings. Instead he gave us the power to do anything that we want to do if we put our minds to it.

The Wright Brothers' dream was to fly; there were challenges in front of them. It took time, money, and investors that believed in their dream to make this a reality. The Wright Brothers also had their bike shop and family to think about.

Like all good things, there are ups and downs. Like learning to read for the first time you need someone to help you get through the hard times when things just don't make sense. Or your car breaks down and you need to fix it when you have little money and you need your car badly. The Wright Brothers had the same problems, but it did not stop them and it paid off at the end.

After the first flight the Wright Brothers could not stop. They had to make the plane stay in the air for a long period of time. This is like after you learn to read you cannot stop learning. You need to keep your dreams in sight. Times do get hard, but we all can make a difference in Ohio if we all learn to read and work together on this task. Just like the Wright Brothers, you too can be flying--the sky is your limit. There is no stopping you as long as you keep your dream alive.

Dale Sherman

A TOUR AROUND THE CIRCLE, THEN AND NOW

I live in Deerfield, Ohio. This was once the home of Ulysses S. Grant's grandmother. Her name was Rachel Kelley Grant, and she is buried in Deerfield. There is an arrow-shaped marker above her tombstone that tells everyone that this is where Ulysses S. Grant's grandmother is buried.

Deerfield once was a booming town. It had railroads, a tannery, and a sparkling water plant. There was also a big hotel, a boarding house, a church and stores. All that has changed now. This is what the area is like now.

On one corner, there was a gas station, but now it is a vacant lot. Behind this lot is the Deerfield Garage and recycling bins. On the side of this is a house that used to be a hotel. Next to the house is another vacant lot, where there was once a store called Starcher's (no relation to me).

If you cross State Route 224, there is now a boat sales place that sells boats, pontoons, and cabin cruisers. This was once the sparkling water plant. Next to this was the old Methodist Episcopal Church, but it is now a vacant lot used by truckers to park their rigs.

Going across Route 14 there is a restaurant. Next to this is Mike's Circle Drive Through. Directly across the street is the old Post Office, which is now an antique store. Next to the old Post Office is the old town hall and a house which was once a boarding house.

If we go down Route 224, past the hotel/house toward Route 225, the next thing we will see is Deerfield Farms, which used to be Ulysses S. Grant's home and tannery. Now there is farm equipment for sale on this site. You can get everything for your farm from a silo to fencing. Up Route 225 is Deerfield's old school house, now a store and Nemenz' Restaurant. Turning around and going back, there is a house and the Friends' Church. It's been there a long time and they are making improvements on it and enlarging it.

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Now we are going back the way we came, but on the other side, going toward Route 14 is the old town hall, and next to this is the house that used to be the old boarding house. Going on down you see Route 225 going off Route 14, and there is the new Methodist Church. Behind the church is the new town hall. On down is an empty building that used to be Walker's Hardware. Turn around, and you will see the American Legion Hall and the new Post Office.

There have been many changes in 200 years. Some of the changes have not been good for the Circle, but many of the old structures have been saved. Deerfield had its celebration of 200 years in 1999, and a good time was had by all. It is nice to look back at our past, visit today's Circle, and hope for a better tomorrow.

Carrol Starcher

OHIO'S FAMOUS CHIEF

Ohio Country it was called; clear boundaries were not there.
Indians were the first to come; this land was in their care.

On the way to counsel one quiet starry night,
A Shawnee Chief and his wife knew the time was right.

Through the sky a shooting star, a glowing flash of light,
To the Shawnee couple, a son was born that night.

Tecumseh was the newborn, his name meant "Shooting Star."
His father thought the flashing light, a sign he would go far.

His father died in battle. His mother went out west.
Left to raise the child, his brother did his best.

He was a gallant warrior, hunting was his pride.
A Shawnee Chief he became and took it all in stride.

Angered by the white man that came to take their land,
Tecumseh knew that it was time that Indians take a stand.

Tecumseh was a peaceful man; he chose to live in peace.
It could only happen when the taking land would cease.

He traveled through the country, to villages far and near
With encouraging words for all the tribes to listen and to hear.

To strive for tribal unity was on Tecumseh's mind;
When this came to be, there would be a sign.

He told them all of happenings that would come to be,
He told of trembling earth and of falling trees.

The bones of every man would shake
As they experienced this giant quake.

Some battles fought were won; some battles fought were lost.
The fighting would continue at whatever the cost.

Tecumseh died a hero, fighting for his land.
He never gave up hope. The Battle of Thames was his last stand.

Carol Rudder

Beautiful Ohio:
This Majestic Land

Artwork created by Idell Kelly

SARAH'S OHIO ALPHABET

What did Sarah do at school today? I see worksheets in your Powerpuff Girls' folder in your bookbag. Um, I see you learned about Ohio State.

You did a good job to color the states that border Ohio. You colored red for Indiana, orange for Michigan, yellow for West Virginia, brown for Pennsylvania and green for Kentucky. It looks great with the blue crayon; Lake Erie and Ohio River that you traced underneath of Ohio, and you labeled both right!

Labeling the major cities in this Ohio map, Uh-Oh, you didn't write Cincinnati, Toledo and Dayton! But you correctly labeled Cleveland, Akron and Columbus with the symbol of the State capital. You know what? You have been to all three of these cities before. Akron is close to our home. We went to Cleveland for fun. And do you remember Columbus? We went to the big zoo. You ate your favorite noodle, soba, at a Japanese restaurant, and you bought a kid's magazine at the Japanese store in Columbus.

What else have you learned at school? How about you tell me it by alphabetical order?

Sarah's Ohio Alphabet

Guess what? The first word starts with the letter **A**. It could be Astronauts. Do you know any famous astronauts? Sailor Moon? That's not even close. Your hero, Sailor Moon, can go to space and live on the moon, but is she a real person from Ohio? Well, Neil Armstrong is the first person to walk on the moon.

How about **B**? Book? Do you know any writers from Ohio? Yes, Dav Pilkey. He wrote your favorite books, the blue Dragon Tales and Captain Underpants, books that make you giggle. He used to live in Kent, that neighbor city of ours.

C could be Cardinal, the red bird with the bright orange beak. It is our state bird. We sometimes see a Cardinal in our backyard.

D for Drink, Tomato Juice is our state drink. It's good for your health, and you need to try it. You can't just drink milk and Kool-Aid.

'E-Talk' begins with **E**, your augmentative and alternative communication. Did your classmates and teacher understand its electrical voice when you had to share your book report? It's nice of our city school district to get it for you, so you can communicate with others.

F is for State Flower, the scarlet carnation. Its flower looks just like your crinkled tissue paper that you are pleased to play with more than its undercover presents.

G is for State Gemstone, flint. Have you ever seen it? It's a smooth hard rock of sedimentary origin. A long, long time ago, Native Americans used it to make knives, spear points and arrowheads.

What word starts with **H**? It can be for Home. You're born and raised here in Ohio, in the city of Cuyahoga Falls, just like your daddy was. This community has a lot of nice services. Do you remember your dad and mom were so scared when you suddenly turned purple and started shaking? Emergency Medics arrived here only 5 minutes after our call, neighbors came to comfort us even in the pitch-black night. On a lighter note; you love to go to Parks and Rec. events,

such as the Goldfish Catch in summer, the Halloween Party and costume contest, and the Easter Egg Hunt.

I is for Inventors. One of Ohio's nicknames is "Mother of Inventors." Thomas Edison (the electric light bulb, the phonograph and the movie camera), the Wright Brothers (the world's first airplane flight), John Lambert (America's first automobile) are a few of the many Ohioan Inventors.

Jacobs Field starts with **J**. It is the Home of the Cleveland Indians. I heard you enjoyed visiting this baseball stadium on your school field trip.

K can be Killer Whales. We don't have to go to Florida or Alaska to see them. They are at Six Flags, only a 40-minute drive away and your favorite place to go.

L stands for Ladybug, a state insect. One of your favorite books was The Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle, and you love to watch Francine, the ladybug in the Disney movie, "A Bug's Life."

M is for Museum. There are many museums in Ohio. You had a school field trip to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History with mom. You enjoyed exploring its exhibitions.

N can be for Ohio's Nicknames. The main nickname is "Buckeye State," and the other is "Mother of Presidents." Do you know what a Buckeye is? Chocolate? Yes, there are Buckeyes which are chocolate-covered peanut butter cracker balls, because they look like a Buckeye nut (which looks like a buck deer's eye). Your friend, Matt's mom, makes the best buckeye chocolate, Umm, yam, yam. Buckeye is actually the state tree.

Have you learned the names of the Presidents from Ohio? Mom didn't even know there were eight presidents from the United States until I came here from Japan. But I guess if you grew up here, you should know those Presidents. Let's check it out. The first president from Ohio was our 9th president, William Henry Harrison, then Ulysses S. Grant (the 18th president), James A. Garfield (the 20th) who was assassinated four months after taking office. Benjamin Harrison (the 23rd) was the grandson of William Henry Harrison. A carnation-clad William McKinley (the 25th), who always wore a red carnation for good luck, was assassinated during his second term. And William Howard Taft (the 27th) was elected in 1908, and Warren G. Harding (the 29th) became president in 1921.

O is, of course, the name of our state, OHIO. What does its shape look like? -- A waving flag. Ohio became the 17th state in the USA on March 1, 1803. Ohio means "good river" or "large river" from the Iroquois Indian word. Indians lived in Ohio for hundreds of years before French and English came to settle here. Remember how the holiday of Thanksgiving started? The people of Ohio are called Ohioans, and sometimes called Buckeyes.

Oh, do you get enough to go through all the alphabet? Why, we could jump to the finish with Z.

Why not **Z** for Zoo? You love to go to the Akron Zoo with your friends. You enjoy not only watching animals but also playing in its playground. On the day of Zoobilation in summer, Rosie the Cow (stuffed person) comes and we eat free ice cream. Rosie is a stranger to you, but she is OK to hug because I am with you.

Do you remember the manatees, the gorillas and the aquarium at the Columbus Zoo? Where else have you been? Remember the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo? It was a freezing

evening, but we enjoyed seeing the Christmas lights and a cup of hot chocolate.

Well, that's all for today. "The End of Sarah's Ohio Alphabet: A to O & Z."

Fumiko Adair

A VISIT TO THE WITCHES' GRAVEYARD

Once upon a time, on Halloween we went out to the witches' graveyard at West Branch Reservoir to see where this one nasty witch was buried. A big bunch of us sat around the place that they called the witch's grave and the only light we had came from lanterns.

Suddenly, the wind started to blow. We heard weird noises. I thought it was my friend, Tubs, but he said it wasn't him.

Just as suddenly as the wind had started to blow, it stopped! We all looked at the witch's grave and saw a shadow coming up out of the grave! Everyone jumped up and ran toward their cars. As we ran, we heard a voice calling, "Leave this place now if you value your lives!" I looked back as I ran to my car and saw the shadow that was around the grave disappear back into the grave.

We went back the next day, in broad daylight, and there was nothing at all. The only thing we saw were the spots where we had been sitting. But some people still say that this will happen every Halloween when there is a full moon.

Candy Childs

WHAT OHIO MEANS TO ME

Ohio means family. What I like about Ohio is the fact that my family has been here for many generations. My grandfather, Oscar McKee, was a World War Two veteran who was injured in the war. He had a farm in Nelsonville, Ohio, where he raised crops. He had five children, four daughters and one son. His son was my dad.

My dad had health problems. When he was ten years old, Granddad sold the farm and moved his family to Columbus so my dad could get treatment at Children's Hospital. My dad stayed in or around the Columbus area the rest of his life. He bought a ranch in Blacklick on Havens Corner Road in 1965. He raised fifteen children of his own and then some grandchildren. He stayed in Blacklick until he passed away in October 1994.

My brothers and sisters and I were all born in Columbus. I was born on November 20, 1961, at St. Ann's Hospital, the old one on Briden Road. That building is no longer there. I lived in Hilliard my first four years, then we moved to Blacklick. I went to Gahanna Schools from Kindergarten until 1978 when I quit. I have lived in Ohio all my life except two years. One year was spent in southern California and another in central Florida. Most of my family still lives in Ohio, so that is why it's home to me.

Ohio means wildlife. I'm a lover of outdoors. I love fields, woods, and the animals that live in and around them. I see deer on a regular basis. I have a nest of squirrels in the tree in the front yard. I even see a raccoon occasionally running around the neighborhood. There are many different kinds of birds in Ohio, also. I see robins, blue jays, cardinals, doves, and many other beautiful types of birds.

I feed the critters on a regular basis so they will keep coming back. They make me feel free, and it relaxes me to watch them. I have always had the privilege of having animals around me. I feel I am blessed for it is the small things like watching the squirrels play or the birds eat that make me forget the harder points in life.

Ohio means changes. The seasons are wonderful. My favorite is probably a toss up between spring and autumn. The summer is nice, but sometimes a little too hot. Winter is absolutely wonderful if you can sit inside by a warm fire watching it snow. Spring and autumn are perfect. In spring, the flowers are blooming and everything seems new. It is peaceful to watch the flowers grow and blossom. Autumn brings the colors above. The trees seem to come alive with their bright colors.

Ohio has been good to me. Ohio means happiness.

Clint McKee

THE OHIO RIVER

From relaxing on the side of the river, to water skiing in the big, deep river,

From living dangerously swimming in the river with no life jacket, to being safe in a boat,

From a slow, gentle ride on the Ohio River, to a faster, risky speed racing boat ride,

From a calm river ride on a clear day, to a rapid fierce river on a stormy day,

From a hot, dry ride on a sunny day, to a cold, wet ride on a rainy day,

From fishing on the side of the river, to fishing in a boat on the river,

From canoeing on the river, and doing all the work to move along, to riding a motorboat that does all the work for you,

From a big expensive house boat with all the amenities, to a small and simple little boat,

From a quiet, peaceful ride in the daylight hours on the Ohio River, to a noisy ride at night, with the sound of fireworks ringing in your ears,

From land to water, if you ever visit Ohio, or if you live in Ohio, and you like the water, then you should visit the Ohio River.

Karen Smith

A SNOW DAY IN OHIO

The snowfall,
very little at first,
but sometimes piled on unexpectedly.
The rain,
pouring down covering the road with the ice
that prevents the kids from going to school.
The smiles,
plastered on their faces after the news.
The snowballs,
chucked across the yard after a long day of fort building
and finally,
the call by their parents telling the kids to make their
entrance into the house
only to be greeted with a hot cup of soup.

Marie Davis

SMALL TOWN

I would rather live in a small town than a big city. People are friendlier in a small town than in a big city. In a small town everybody knows everybody else. In a small town it's not as busy as a big city.

In a small town everybody knows each other's business. When you walk into a restaurant, people greet you by name. They also know where you want to sit, and whether you want smoking or non-smoking. They know what you like to drink with your meals and what kind of meals you like to eat. For example, when I walk into Waffle House in Snellville, they know that I want a sweet tea, a coffee and a triple order of hash browns with cheese, onions and ham. Another example is when I walk into the corner store they have ready for me a 20 oz. Pepsi, a pack of Marlboros, and a pack of Juicy Fruit chewing gum.

I have found that small town people are friendlier than big city people. People in small towns seem to smile more and say hi when they see you walking down the street or in a store. Small town people like to sit around at the local corner store and shoot the wind. This helps make them more laid back.

It seems fewer accidents happen in small towns due to people not being in as much of a hurry to get places, like big city people always seem to be.

That is why I would rather live in a small town than in a big city.

Aaron Highley

YEATMAN'S COVE

The name of Yeatman's Cove came from a man named Griffin Yeatman and his father Thomas Yeatman. These men were pioneers who had a tavern near the public landing known now as the Levee. This tavern was a popular gathering place to drink beer and socialize. Griffin Yeatman died in 1849 leaving this place in Ohio along the river a historical landmark. Today Yeatman's Cove is a beautiful park along the Cincinnati river front.

As a child my mother used to take me to Yeatman's Cove. We would pack a lunch, take the big towels and wear our swimsuits so we could stand under the waterfalls in the central fountain swim area alongside the river. I could never understand how the water could fall off of, what seemed to me as a little girl, a towering building.

Every Saturday morning in the summer I would be down on the river picnicking with my sisters and my mother at Yeatman's Cove. We would bring our roller skates to skate along the huge steps of the levee, picnic on the grass and swim in the pool that my mother called "the Fountain of Youth" because she was too big to swim in it.

Yeatman's Cove has changed. It has been expanded to include a skating rink and a playground, but you can still swim in the fountain and picnic on the grass. The name has been changed to Sawyer's Point, but I still keep the tradition on Saturdays at Yeatman's Cove in the summer time with my sisters and their children. And when I have children of my own, I want them to know about the old Yeatman's Cove, and I will call it the "Fountain of Youth" because I will be too big to swim in it.

Reshaunda Beal

I AM A BUCKEYE

I am a Buckeye.
I live in Ohio.
I grow everywhere in Ohio.
I am very strong and beautiful.
I am the state tree.
It symbolizes Ohio.
All people like me.
I give people shelter and comfort.
I let people know what season will be coming.
I have beautiful colors from green to red and yellow.
I am the proud tree of Ohio.

Wan-he Zhang

THE CITY BIRDS AND THE COUNTRY BIRDS

My parents' home on the southeast side of Columbus where I lived in my teens had fruit trees in the front yard. Blue jays, cardinals, sparrows, and pigeons came to eat in the yard because of the trees. After I got married and moved to the country, I noticed all kinds of other birds. I've seen crows, red-headed woodpeckers, pheasants, red-tail hawks, an owl, wild turkeys, and hummingbirds.

The woodpeckers have really caught my attention; here in Mount Perry we have large and small. I have seen some that are very little with black, red, and white spots. Some are medium with gray spots, black wings, and red necks. One day I even saw a large woodpecker land in my front yard. It had a red head and black wings with a spotted chest. It was so pretty I got out my camera and snapped a picture of it. I was so amazed because they said they are not supposed to be down here. But I have proof of it. How about that! It was out in my flowers and was pecking on an old tree trunk. That old thing didn't last long, and soon there was only a small piece left.

I can see why there are so many bird watchers in Ohio. Many different kinds of beautiful birds are every place I have been, not only in Columbus and Mt. Perry, but also at parks and lakes like Wyandot Lake, Hoover Reservoir, Wayne National Forest, and Griggs Dam. Check out a bird book at the library, take a walk, and see how many different birds you can identify.

Ella Lowe

WHAT OHIO MEANS TO ME

I have mentioned many times to both family and friends that Ohio was a refuge for me when I traveled here with the carnival in 1986. I met a few people here during my abbreviated stay before having to travel to the next state.

After leaving from Ohio I traveled to a few more states with the carnival.

I had been content with traveling from state to state prior to visiting here.

There appeared to be a longing in my heart for this state. I was unable to get Ohio out of my mind.

On one hot sunny day I asked myself what does Ohio mean to me and why had it left an impact upon me. My answer readily came; Ohio was a place of peace, joy, entertainment, and opportunity. It was my sanctuary.

And even today, it still remains my sanctuary. Wow, what a name -- "Ohio, The Heart of It All." Now that it is my home, there are many opportunities for me.

I had gone to a local church in the community. This is where I met my wife of my dreams. After knowing each other for a year in the church we did not date, but just said hello. After we dated for some time and were involved in the church, we got married. I have been blessed with my one and only true love. So the next step was to build our first home, which was constructed right here in Columbus, Ohio. Things are really taking off in Ohio; we have a home and now a family car.

Additionally, look at all the attractions here in the actual heart of it all -- downtown Columbus. Where you can find once a year the one and only rib fest! WOW! Look at the Ohio Theater where there are plays and musicals.

Well, you asked me what Ohio means to me. It's a family settling down atmosphere where everyone can live and be a proud Ohioan.

Oh, don't forget the OSU football team. They have just won their first national championship game in a while against Miami. GO BUCKS!

So with all this fun in Columbus, Ohio, I'll be right here in the heart of it all to complete my happiness. I love Ohio.

Cyrus Henry

OLD MAN'S CAVE
A place to visit during Ohio's Bicentennial

A lot of people take nature for granted, but once people see Old Man's Cave they change their perspective. One of many special places to go in Ohio would be Old Man's Cave. People go there because it's very beautiful, peaceful, and fun. People also go to learn more about nature and its history. Old Man's Cave has a variety of things to do. Some examples are camping, hiking, picnics, and playing games like Frisbee. Old Man's Cave is also a very nice place to take pictures. All kinds of people go for different reasons. Places like this bring people closer together.

Old Man's Cave is located on State Route 664 in Hocking County. The Old Man's Cave area can be divided into five principal sections, which are found along the valley of Old Man's Creek. The five sections are Upper Falls, Upper Gorge, Middle Falls, Lower Falls, and Lower Gorge. At the Upper Falls, the Grandma Gatewood trail begins its six-mile course connecting three park areas. The three park areas are Old Man's Cave, Cedar Falls, and Ash Cave.

After the Civil War the entire gorge was called Old Man's Cave. This happened because of a guy named Richard Rowe. Richard made his home in the cave until his death. He is buried beneath the ledge of the main cave. Richard moved from the mountains of Tennessee to the Ohio River. He moved to the Ohio River around the year of 1796. He established a trading post. He also traveled through Ohio along the Scioto River. Richard Rowe found the Hocking Region. So we now have the history of Old Man's Cave thanks to him.

Old Man's Cave has beautiful waterfalls, unique rocks, species, and beautiful trees. It has a pothole that is in sand by

the breath-taking stream. This is known as the devil's bathtub. There is a building that shows people the importance of plants, rocks, fossils, and teaches them history. Old Man's Cave has a store that sells unique items. So I hope that during the Bicentennial year, many will include a trip to Old Man's Cave to enjoy its natural beauty.

Michele Devore

WHY COLUMBUS, OHIO, IS SPECIAL TO ME

As children, my sister, Dorothy, and I grew up in a part of Columbus called Franklinton. It is a wonderful community. When a person is in need, somebody is always willing to lend a hand. They help by giving spiritual guidance, a shoulder to cry on, or many other ways.

The people of Franklinton were there when our Mom died and also at Christmas to make sure us children had a good Christmas. A man dressed as Santa came with a bag of gifts for my sister and me, and the church brought food and gifts. They made it a special Christmas because we weren't expecting to have a Christmas. This was over 15 years ago.

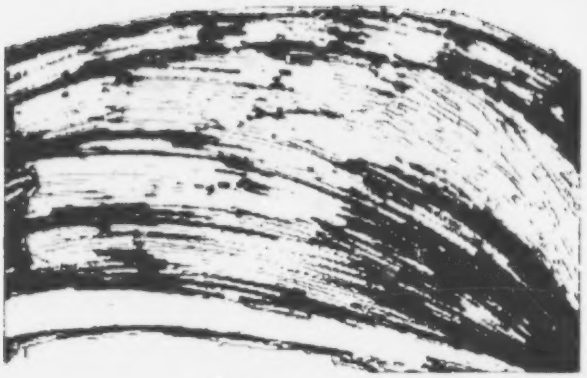
Recently I have had a run of hardships. It all started when a friend of mine had a heart attack at Thanksgiving. Then on December 16, my stepmother had a heart attack. Then on December 30, we had a house fire. People helped with furniture, clothes, food, money, and spiritual guidance because they know how devastating it is to lose so much.

On January 12, 2003, tragedy struck again. This time I lost my younger sister, Dorothy. She was only 27 years old. She died from carbon monoxide poisoning. In this tragic time, the community is once again helping me with love and compassion. They help me to stay strong. Without my family and the community I was raised in, I would not be strong enough to deal with these tough times. If I could give an award to any community, it would be to the people of Franklinton, for the care and compassion they show in times of need.

This is dedicated to my sister and best friend Dorothy Tierney, 1973-2003

Tamara Smith

Beautiful Ohio: Land Where My Dreams All Come True



Artwork created by Gaye Weatherall

THE DAY I'LL NEVER FORGET

It was Monday morning in 1987. My mother took me to school. At around twelve noon, I saw black smoke and fire with a very loud sound that made everybody run out from school. I thought it was the end of the world. Both pupils and teachers ran.

I tried to run, but I felt like something was holding me to the ground. I tried as much as I could to get out, but I could not. I was lucky. A man coming from nowhere came and picked me up and ran with me. When we came out of the school compound, everybody was just running in different directions. The sound, smoke, and fire increased.

I saw a plane dropping some big drum-like things. When I asked the man, he told me, "Those are bombs, not drums." I asked him, "What are bombs?" He said, "These are what the army uses to fight." I did not know where my father and mother and my sisters were. We ran to the nearby town some miles away from my town. The men took great care of me. I cried day and night and asked where my father and mother were. Nobody could tell me.

I was taken to a nearby school. I spent four years in Ethiopia without my father and mother. When the war broke out in Ethiopia, I moved to Kenya, where I spent several years. In Kenya, I found out where my father and mother were. They tried looking for me all those years but could not find me. My mother came to me when she heard that I was in Kenya. She told me that people told them I was not alive. It is always good for children to grow up with their parents' love, and I missed it.

I will not forget the day my mother left me in school.

Laat Arier

SNOW

When everything is covered with white snow,
It looks like a beautiful photo.
I can smell neither grass nor soil.
I can see neither green nor brown.
I hear just a quiet sound.
I taste the moment.
It touches me mysteriously.
Snow refreshes and cleanses my tiring thoughts.

Mamie Ito

SEPTEMBER ELEVEN

It was Tuesday morning when I took off from Nairobi to Amsterdam. It was a long trip with much excitement. Everybody was happy to leave one hundred degree heat. Life had not been easy in our refugee camp in Kenya due to the many problems that were facing people in the camp. Some of these problems were lack of medication, food, shelter, and clothing, and killing at night by unknown people. Such a situation made many people think going to the USA would solve a lot of problems. We needed a country with peace and freedom.

At five o'clock, our plane landed in Amsterdam for a thirty-minute break. A staff member from IOM, which was making arrangements for our trip to New York, told us to be ready to move to the gate. On my way to the gate, I saw on the TV screen, "Breaking News." I stopped and kept looking. What I saw was a ball of smoke and people running. That image turned my mind toward what I saw in my home town (in southern Sudan.) I was shook and could not even say anything. The friend standing near me turned his eyes away and started talking to himself. He said, "God, what have we done? Everywhere we go the only thing we see are people dying and tears with sorrows. It means that no place is safe."

The tears started rolling down his face. I told him, "Evils are in every part of the world. People die for what they do not deserve. They do not know what they die for." It was the saddest moment in my life. It was too much like what I had been through. We were told about what had happened. We slept in the airport the first day. The next morning, we were taken to KLM accommodations, and we spent seven days there.

On the eighth day, we came back to the airport and we came to New York. The city was quiet. It was really a bad time. It seemed like the Arabs were following us wherever we went. The next morning we took off for Cleveland. My

journey started with happiness and ended with sorrows. I pray that no one should have a journey like the one I had.

The world should know that the war on terrorism is everybody's war. It does not belong to the United States or Britain. People should join hands against evil. People who died on September eleven are the heroes of the world, and the world will remember each and everyone.

Laat Arier

THE BIG JUMP

The experience to come to EEUU was a little scary for me at the beginning, because I did not know how to start my life. First I tried to get a job and I did. I'm a waiter in a Hispanic restaurant. That was my first goal. Now things are doing great, thank God.

I was born in Caracas, Venezuela in South America. This is a very small country in South America with a population of 24,000,000 people. It has a very nice warm weather all year. Our official language is Spanish. Venezuela is located close to Colombia, Brazil, Guyana and the Caribbean Sea. I came here because I wanted to improve my English and learn about North American culture. I would like to talk about my first experience when I came to Ohio five months ago.

My first visit to downtown that I think reflects Ohio's history was on July 4. I saw the place where you can see the La Nina, La Pinta and Santa Maria and the history about Christopher Columbus. I do not know the name of the place right now. At the same time I could see the big party or independence celebration. There were a lot of fireworks, food, drinks, and interesting events. I went to the theater to see a dance musical about Dracula; it was a great show, and I had the opportunity to go to the Ohio Expo Center to see the train show.

The first time that I came here to school, I made a U-turn; the police pulled me over and then gave me a ticket in the school parking lot. So I know the courthouse in downtown Columbus.

The most important thing that foreigners can notice in EEUU is how safe you feel in this country and how nice, warm, and respectful people are. The most difficult thing in EEUU is that wintertime is so cold outside but at the same time the city looks beautiful.

The most important thing that happened to me was that I met a great girl. She is from Ohio. She has been my support,

my friend, my English teacher–everything. Now she is my fiancé and in the future my wife.

Things are a little difficult when you do not know the language of the country you are living in, but if you try hard and be patient you can do whatever you want to improve your life in this beautiful country that gives you a lot of opportunities.

Douglas Velazco

OHIO: MY ADOPTED HOMETOWN

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, "the concrete jungle," as it's known to many. Sunshine is filtered by the tall buildings, and the smell of car emissions permeates the air. People are packed into trains and buses like sardines. Flowers can only be seen in window boxes and at the botanical gardens spread around the city.

I remember my parents telling me at 17 that we were moving to Ohio. I was devastated at the news. I did not want to leave my beloved city. I just knew I would miss the hustle and bustle of city life.

Most of the drive to Ohio was done in the evening. I can remember closing my eyes in a bustling city, replete with noise, action and lights and waking up to sunshine, in a scene reminiscent of a picture postcard.

Here was what I read about in my geography books! The sun shone down on me, warming my face. I could smell the earth. I could see the blue of the sky, unimpeded by buildings. It looked like it went on forever. The colors of the wild flowers along the side of the road were so vivid!

I can remember peering out the car window, driving along I-76 and seeing a cow for the first time, up close and personal! I was amazed! Up until that point in my life, I had only seen them depicted in cartoon commercials (Elsie the cow).

Walking down the street for the first time was an experience I will never forget. People actually looked you in the eyes, stopped, and said "hello." At first, I was too stunned to respond. No one in New York had made eye contact, let alone stopped to talk! It was amazing to me that strangers were so friendly!

Some of the other differences were the fact that people could actually leave the doors open at night, and some actually slept outside! Drive-in movies and drive-up windows were other things that were alien to me. There was no such

thing in the city. The absence of taxicabs and buses coming along every five minutes took my breath away. How did people get around? By God! Where were the people? There was no one walking along the sidewalks. Instead of the rumbling of trains and traffic, I was put to sleep by the sound of crickets gently chirping their lullabies.

New York may be the "city that never sleeps," but Ohio is, in my opinion, the "best place to raise a family."

Jean Piscitani

MY LIFE

This is a true story of my life as far back as I can remember. I still can remember some of my past life – even when I was as young as five. I was one of seven kids.

When I was five, we lived on a farm. We had some chickens and a dog on that farm. We also had two horses that were jumpers, a mare that was brown, and a baby colt that was white. We lost the farm and then lived in a trailer down on Lake Street. We moved from there to a little house on New Milford Road. We only lived there a short time, then moved to a newer house that was in back of where we had lived before. We had to make a road to the house that was up into a field. It was the first house on the road. Now there are more houses on the road than when I was younger.

When I was younger, in 1960, our house burned down. We then moved around for a few years. As I got older, we moved some more. I was getting tired of school, so I quit. I ran around with a few girls for a while, but then broke up with them. My family was still moving around. I moved to Florida with my mom and dad and brothers and sisters. When I got older, I went into the United States Army and was sent over to Viet Nam. I got out of the Army in 1969.

In 1969, I got married, but my wife left me. We had a little girl. I got a divorce, not knowing any better. After the divorce, I could not keep a job, so I went back into the Army and was sent to Korea. I wanted to make the Army my life, but couldn't because I became a drunk – drinking all the time. I was discharged from the Army a second time.

After being discharged from the Army, I moved back to Florida. I was in a serious accident; I got hit by a truck pulling a 30-foot load. I was messed up pretty good and don't remember too much of it all. I was in a coma for about a year and a half and in the hospital for a total of five years. But one thing I can say now from way down deep in me, God was with me to be able to tell all this. You see, the upper and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

lower lobes of my brain were messed up really good from the accident. I had to learn how to talk, walk, and use my arms and legs all over again. My younger brother helped me to learn all these things again. I thought my family was "picking on me" and wasn't too helpful. But my brother and sisters kept on helping me. Finally, I realized that I had to learn all over again if I was ever going to have a good life.

I have traveled across the United States three different times in my lifetime, but when it came to settling down, I moved back to Ohio to the area where I was born and raised. I met a wonderful woman and we were married two years ago. My wife and I go fishing and camping a lot and even take our dog camping with us. After being out of school for 35 years, I am now attending GED classes in order to get my high school diploma. I am also learning how to use a computer so when my wife and I get our own computer, we will be able to play games, search the Internet, and send e-mail messages to our family and friends.

Ron Heckert

SNOW

Snow falling to the ground
It can be so beautiful as it falls
It begins to cover up everything it touches
Like a blanket
It falls and decorates your world.

Snow is meant to play in,
Go sledding in,
Skiing,
Build a snowman,
Or
Just lie down in it and make a snow angel!

Snow is fun
Until
It begins to melt away.
The snowman begins to melt; the snow angel begins to fade
And
The once beautifully decorated trees are no longer
decorated.

Snow only lasts for a season
And
Yes, it is beautiful when it first falls
So
Go enjoy the snow

Lisa Wright

COAT

Cold weather

Order a new one

All wool coat

Tight fit

Miroslava Deynega

Issues and Attitudes

Artwork created by Amber Crago

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OHIO'S STUDENTS

My name is Beverly Pattyanne Tinsley. I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, and attended Cincinnati Public Schools. I would like to explain how a learning disability can lead to social difficulties and the effect this can have on communities as a whole by outlining my own experiences. Many students in Ohio suffer from learning disabilities, and these students need support so they can become productive citizens.

My earliest recollection of my learning disability was around the age of five. I was the only sibling in a large family that encountered problems with maintaining passing grades in school. My many health complications necessitated various medications, and I had what I felt to be a severe speech impediment. This caused much ridicule from family as well as friends and the entire neighborhood.

When I started school, my wonderful mother researched and discovered special educational programs for me and enrolled me in speech therapy. Thank you, Mother, for your love and devotion. My therapist was a white lady, and she worked as hard for me as I did for her. She understood that I felt stupid and how difficult it was for me when others seemed to share this opinion. My other teachers felt I was not working up to my potential and compared me to my brothers and sisters. This compounded the problem and added to my confusion. My speech therapist encouraged me to "visualize" and concentrate on each word as I strived to speak correctly. Television also helped considerably as I could mimic the words without fear of others criticizing my futile attempts.

By this time I truly hated school. I had been enrolled in special classes, which added to the label of dummy that I had affixed to myself. I had few friends and no self-esteem. I was consistently late for classes and would sneak out early. Of course, this could lead to my teachers calling my mother, and I would be punished. I was punished not for my learning

disability but for my misbehavior and lack of efforts. However, this is difficult for a child to perceive, and I felt I could do nothing right.

My mother tried so hard to help me to learn. At this time in Ohio not much was known about learning disabilities. My report card continued to reflect my seemingly miserable attempts to learn by conventional methods of teaching. So I was returned to the special education class – or the "class of dummies." I wanted to drop out of this torturous madness, but my parents would not hear of it. Somehow, I graduated.

God must have seen me and sent me my salvation – my son, Rayshawn Durtler. Bless my son for his unconditional love and support for his mother. However, my relationship with his father did not survive because of my inability to confront him with what I felt was the truth of myself. I could never bring myself to tell him what a failure I felt I was. His ultimate rejection led to my conviction that only smart "good" people were acceptable.

It was not until 1990 that I learned that my particular disability had a name. I was watching Oprah one day, and they were discussing dyslexia. Now that I knew what it was, I felt I could seek help. I went into therapy and continue with this therapy today. It is a lot of work to change a lifetime of conditioning. I am learning that I am not a bad person. There is no reason to be ashamed.

One day, my son and I found ourselves bored with the rainy weather and started playing silly games with his little cars. At first there were no rules, but a broken fingernail changed that! So, a few simple rules evolved. Eventually, his interest strayed to another project. I had become intrigued with this little game of ours. I sat up most of the night developing a game board and called it Car Shop. My son and I played this game constantly. Eventually, the neighborhood children were playing and competing with us. The board became well used, and the kids were playing it instead of watching Saturday morning cartoons. Friends encouraged me to take my game to an attorney for rights protection. That's

how good they felt it was. So, I found an attorney and then an engineer to do the prototype. I am currently looking for investors to help me get this game out on the market.

In my opinion, this game has been the beginning of something very exciting for me. I have discovered a sense of self-confidence and self-worthiness, a new point of view of myself, as well as a chance to make money.

Then I realized that if I could do something like this, surely I could help other learning disabled people. So, I devised a way of educating people with these disabilities.

Creative Minds At Work is a concept designed to help children and adults focus on constructive ideas and learn employment and entrepreneur skills. This program works for those with or without learning disabilities. It is a hands-on learning technique that students participate in through playing games. It is an entry point for success for those who have difficulty with the conventional way of learning. I volunteer my time in the Cincinnati Public School system to work with children using this program.

I hope that children growing up in Ohio will never have to endure the rejection that I felt. Children with learning disabilities need to be diagnosed early and then receive the instruction they need to become successful learners. I am living proof that a person with a learning disability can succeed in life.

Beverly Tinsley

PLAYA-2-PLAYA

Nike Air's on my feet;
I'm way 2 sweet!
Got a ton at my waist don't trip;
Step and get busted...

Living life 2 the fullest so feel this unstoppable;
Go copp this, real shit that's collecting "Mill's
Like (Bill Gates)"...

Sloppy tactics get your butt whipped & kicked "The
Ohio State" way all day!

Smoke green's darker than my "Regal" or the eagle on
My deep dish "Daytona's"...

With plush seats, brown sugar like my complexion,
Don't stop or you'll get whipped my way, and that's the
"uptown" way...

Jermaine Martin

MEAN STREETS

Why must the streets be a war zone
Where people cannot walk alone?
Remember how it used to be?
Doors were open, people free.

Collectively we are in a cage
Built with hatred, fueled by rage.
It is so bad and getting worse.
We read the news, Bible and verse.

Once we opened our hands to all.
We did not falter, we did not fall.
Now we keep ourselves shut away
Hoping for a better day.

They say it will change, we must cope;
But on the streets they're selling dope.
So much violence, so much hate--
Will help come before it's too late?

How did we get to such a place?
We need kindness, we need grace.
We need to live in peace and trust
Or I think God may get rid of us.

Kim Matthews

REMEMBER ME?

I was that dude racing the block
I'm that person in DeSoto Bass in 2001 that got popped and shot

I'm that brotha who got in the game at eleven
I'm that brotha sitting in a cell at twenty-seven

I'm that dude that used to smoke crack
I'm that fiend who robbed your brother and your cousin Jack

I'm that cat that was living hard
I'm that brotha from DeSoto Bass Boulevard

Now I'm a servant of the Lord
I'm the one who strives to follow God and yearns for accord

I'm that brotha who knows I need help
I'm that one who accepts I can't do it by myself

I share these words for people to see
Everybody capable of change: Remember me.

DeShawn Steed

DON'T USE DRUGS

I am going to give you some reasons why a person should not use drugs. The most common drugs that are used today are alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Many other illegal drugs are also very dangerous.

Alcohol is contained in beer, wine, brandy, bourbon, etc. Because of its availability, it is the most commonly abused drug in this country. It is involved in almost half of all suicides, murders, and accidental deaths in the U.S. Also, how about all the homes that are broken because of domestic violence and child abuse?

I have personally known alcoholics who were good people when they were sober, but let them get started drinking and they were not nice to be around. I even knew one person who died of DTs. Nobody starts out to be an alcoholic, but to be one it starts with the first drink.

Of all the different ways that tobacco is used, smoking tobacco cigarettes is the most addictive and deadly. Cigarettes contain nicotine, a poison used in insecticide, and black tar that sticks to the lungs and makes breathing difficult. Cigarette smoke contains about 4000 chemicals, including such poisons as arsenic, DDT, and formaldehyde. Smokers increase their chance of developing lung cancer 220% compared to lifetime non-smokers.

I know about this personally because my sister was a smoker who died of lung cancer. Most smokers are very inconsiderate of non-smokers; they will light up without asking us if we care if they smoke in our house or car. I don't believe they intend to be inconsiderate. They don't realize non-smokers do not like the smell of tobacco. We non-smokers really don't like the secondhand smoking and the

side effects of it. The secondhand smoke causes irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat of non-smokers. These are some of the reasons that you should not use the drug called tobacco.

You may say there is nothing wrong with the use of marijuana or that marijuana is used to help people medically. Most people who use it are not using it for medical purposes, but use it for the high or whatever it is they are looking for. Marijuana users ingest almost four times as much tar as tobacco smokers. Risks for marijuana users include cancer, brain damage, heart disease, and lung damage, just to name a few. Peer pressure is the number one reason people start smoking marijuana. What is wrong with just standing up and saying "no" to those who try to intimidate you to use marijuana?

These are just a few of the most common drugs that you may be tempted with, but is it worth the problems that are caused by their use? To me, it is almost like they don't care what happens to them. But what about the worry and fear of the people who love them? No person is an island unto himself; we touch each others' lives in everything we do. Is it a selfish person who doesn't consider the hurt they cause other people and themselves? I will let you decide. These are some of the reasons you shouldn't use drugs.

Leland Salyer

TWIN TOWERS

We stood so tall above them all,
Watching over our city,
The two of us, oh so pretty,
Seeing and hearing every little creak,
Echoes of cars and people speak.

We knew things that no one could know,
Never telling our secrets,
We stood tall and strong until one dreadful morning
When something went wrong,
Two planes from nowhere crashed right through
Us without a care,
Two balls of flame,
So many lives were claimed,
One by one we fell tumbling to the ground,
Turning life and sound into silence all around,
Where once there was laughter,
Now there are tears, bringing to reality
Our worst of fears.

No longer standing over our city
A beautiful sight, now such a pity,
Still so remembered after a year,
The loss of loved ones still so clear.
And as long as we remember
September 11, that dreadful day,
America will stand united, never to stray.

Melissa Bartley

A "FOUND" WEEKEND

Founder's Day celebration was my first significant event that I attended in Ohio. Akron, Ohio, is the birthplace of Alcoholics Anonymous. Thousands gather in this city from all parts of the United States and other countries to celebrate and honor the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, Doctor Bob and Bill W. This is a three-day weekend celebration held at the University of Akron. In June, 1997, I went with my boyfriend and his sponsor to this event. I didn't know what to expect, but I was real excited about going out of town. This was something that I hadn't done in a long time. Because of my alcoholism, I wasn't able to do anything worthwhile, and I didn't want to do anything but drink.

The event starts Friday at 8:00 A.M. and runs into the night with meetings, plays, 12-step panels, and all-night discussion meetings called Alkathons. Saturday events include Al-Anon Panels (which consist of the family members of the alcoholics who suffer as well as the alcoholics).

There are bus tours to historic AA sites like St.Thomas Hospital Ignatius Hall where Dr. Bob and Bill took the third member, Bill D., to be "detoxed." We also went to the detox center at Marymount Hospital and some Sober clubs. An important stop on this tour is the Mayflower Hotel where in the lobby Bill W. made a decision to try and make contact with someone for help. Instead of drinking, he used the church directory and called a minister who put him in touch with someone from the Oxford Group, and he was on his way to recovery.

Dr. Bob's house, also known as the "Home of Miracles," was the main attraction for me. At this house, you walk up 12 steps to enter, and then you are greeted with a "Welcome home." The first time that I walked up those 12 steps and went into the house, my heart started beating and pounding so fast that I started sweating, and I broke down and cried. I couldn't believe that I was really there. My boyfriend, who is

now my husband, held me and assured me it was okay. Wiping my tears away, he told me that he understood exactly how I felt. I said to him that I couldn't believe that a drunk like me, a person whose life had no meaning at one time, was there in such a wonderful place.

Once I was inside the house, I looked around at all of the old furniture. In the kitchen, the coffee pot that was used when Dr. Bob and Bill were putting the 12 Step program together was still there. Also, there were pictures of everyone who had had a hand in helping to found AA.

When I went upstairs and walked into Dr. Bob's bedroom, a great warmth rushed over me. There on his bed laid an open Bible. I got down on my knees and prayed, thanking God for Dr. Bob, Bill W., and all of the others for starting such a God-given program like Alcoholics Anonymous. I thanked Him for removing me from the streets and from the bondage of alcohol and for showing me that I can live a happy, joyous, and free life, living life on life's terms *One Day At A Time*. That night came the "big speaker meeting," which was also exciting to me. Finally, there were dances which concluded the Saturday program.

On Sunday morning at 7:30 A.M., there was a motorcade to Dr. Bob and his wife Annie's burial site, where there was a Memorial Tribute. Afterwards, we went back to the University for a spiritual closing. On the way home, I closed my eyes thinking about everything I had experienced during the weekend. I felt truly blessed then and now to be a part of something so wonderful. Each year I look forward to this significant event that has such a wonderful impact on my life and thousands of others.

God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!

Lillie Bargainer

HELPING HAND

Oh, I just can't figure out or understand
Why a child is left without a helping hand.
When a child is left alone
And there's no one at home,
His eyes are left with tears
To face all the fears.

Although he didn't ask to be born,
His life is now shattered and torn.
Then he looks up to the sky
And asks, "God, why do I
Have to face this world alone?
Did I do something wrong?"
Then God answers his prayers
By sending an angel there
Letting him know that he is now in Jesus' care.

Oh, I just can't figure out or understand
Why a child is left without a helping hand.
Then he looks up toward the sky,
He says, "Thank you, God! I'm alive.
I knew You would come for me.
'Cause I just couldn't figure out or understand
Why I was left without a helping hand."

Carolyn Clark

A HOMELESS PERSON IS NOT A FACELESS PERSON

Have you ever taken the time to look around
As you're walking down the street?
Have you seen the many faces of the
People you could meet?

They come in all shapes and colors,
Some black, some white, some young, some old
All trying hard to stay warm in the cold.

Some will still try and smile,
Trying hard to keep their own style.
They will shake your hand if only you try,
But if you take a look into their eyes,
You will see their cry of help and need,
Wanting to feed their children, their neighbor,
Or a friend.

At the end of an alley, standing in the cold,
I see a young girl eating someone else's mold
Picked from the trash still covered in ash.
It's better than nothing she says with a cringe.
Oh, what it would be like to be able to binge
On hot steaks and wine, potatoes and bread.
Oh, what a feast it would be, even if only in my head.

The children they amaze me still, so full of glow
Even as their box beds fill up with snow.
They play in the streets with nothing to eat,
And their toys, though empty cans, are still pretty neat.
I wish I could help them as I start to cry.
We could if each of us gives it a try.
A smile, a handshake, a dollar, a meal
Giving is easy as long as you feel.

So, as we sit in our warm homes tonight
With more than enough to eat
And we're watching *Survivor* on TV and
thinking that's neat,
Try hard not to forget the survivors
Living in the street.

Tracy Miller

HIDING FROM DYSLEXIA

All my life I have hid from Dyslexia and was very ashamed of it. I thought I would never find the help I needed. I remember the doctor at my kindergarten eye examination. I will never forget the look on his face as he tried to figure out if I had a problem with my eyes or just could not read the eye chart. You see, when you have Dyslexia the E's get turned around and it's hard to read a simple eye chart.

In the first grade I was tested for Dyslexia. Since it is inherited and my father could not read or write, it was no surprise I was diagnosed with it also. In elementary and middle school I was put in learning disabilities classes. Unfortunately, the classes did not focus on phonics, which is the key to helping someone with L.D., and I fell further behind. I resented the label "learning disability" and refused to be in the L.D. classes in high school, so I was put in the general education classes. I was terrified of being called on to read out loud or write on the chalkboard. I hid and did what I could to get by.

The only thing that saved me in school was sports. I was a decent runner and track was something I could look forward to.

Graduation was a difficult time and my future seemed limited because I was not able to read and write well. I was so good at hiding my Dyslexia that not too many people knew and just assumed I was going to college.

After high school I worked every minimum wage job in town and partied way too much on the weekends. My parents were getting tired of my lifestyle. I was going nowhere fast. They sat me down and told me, "You need a skill." Since they didn't know what else to do with me, they

dropped me off at beauty school kicking and screaming. To this day I have no idea how I passed my state board examination, but I did.

I became a hair stylist mainly because it was a career I could handle. I was good at it and felt comfortable with the public. I worked for twelve years as a stylist, married a wonderful man and had two beautiful children. I fooled myself into thinking I had it all, but I was wrong.

I did the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. I walked into the Warder Literacy Center. They first tested my reading skills. I was surprised and pleased to learn that I had an 8th grade reading level and tested out of the reading program. However, my spelling was at a 2nd grade level. The center matched me with an excellent tutor who has helped me so much. In one year my spelling score has raised two whole levels.

I feel my life has taken on a new direction. I no longer style hair. Instead I coach 7th grade girls basketball and I love it! I feel it is my calling. In the off-season I stay home with my children, which I think is the greatest job in the world.

I want to thank all the people at the Literacy Center for giving me the help I desperately needed. The center does make a difference in the lives of people. I have learned that Dyslexia will always be a part of me but it is not who I am. I will never again hide from the fear of being dyslexic.

Lisa Holmes

THE SKIES OF DARKNESS

The skies of darkness,
Do we not fear?
Look all around us,
The terror is here.

The skies of darkness,
Do we not hate?
Many lives lost
As if we were bait.

The skies of darkness,
Do we not mourn?
Twin tower collapse,
And now it's a war.

The skies of darkness,
Do we not care?
The world is crying,
It doesn't seem fair.

The skies of darkness,
Do we not anger?
Look what they've done,
We are in great danger.

The skies of darkness,
Do we not get sore?
"Please" just stop!
I can't take anymore.

Crystal Csuhta

READ

Repeat many times the pronunciation
Expect to understand more English every day
Always I have to watch English programs on T.V.
Dedication is the best way to learn English

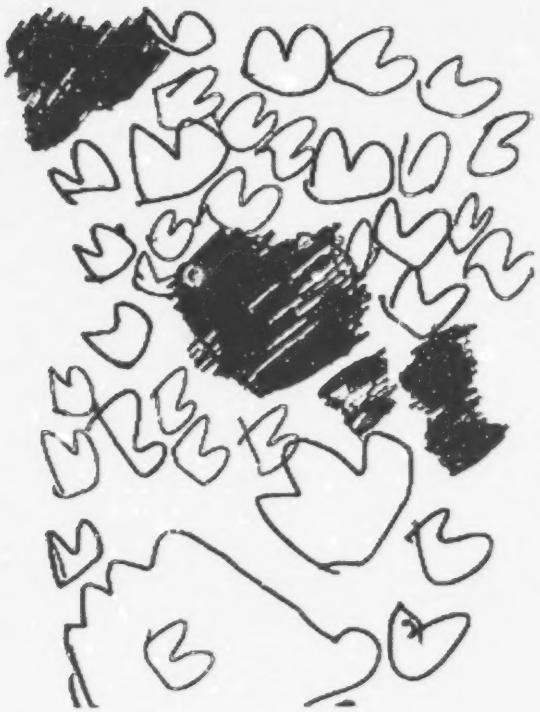
Fernando Negrete

MY ISLAND

Long time ago
There lived in the West Indies of islands
He name Pablo
Come from in West Indies
He poor, got no money
No food, no light
He going to the city.

Sheyla Caraballo

Personal Reflections



Artwork created by Eddie Soich

THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

As I stand here looking at this man in the mirror looking back
at me,
He's asking what do I see.
Now I become the mirror and he's looking angry,
Asking questions about this enemy I see,
But this enemy was me.
As I attempted to walk away from this picture of rejection,
I was stopped and humiliated by a confusing reflection.

I'm the man that knows you.
You are the man that's untrue.
As I tried my best to clear my mind,
The man in the mirror took me back in time.
As I meditated deeply on what's being said,
Aggravating thoughts went through my head.
I stood there and looked at him treacherously
And pointed my finger at this enemy that I see,
But it was me.

As I stand there in denial,
The man in the mirror asks me how I've never done any time,
But the man in the mirror is blowing my mind.
He's the one who committed the crimes.

I felt that I was convicted of losing myself,
Because I became someone else.
This confessing reflection made me stand still,
I couldn't move at my own will.
I remember that day I was in another world,
I accused my brother of messing with my girl.
He never did anything wrong;
It was me singing that same old crazy song.
This is what I claimed,
But the man in the mirror said I was insane.

Right then I knew that it was time to change,
That's the day I stopped shooting drugs into my veins.
I finally realized exactly who I was,
So I fell to my knees and got help from above.
The power of the Lord came over me.
My eyes were open and now I see the enemy within me.

I stood there for a while.
He tried to hide behind a smile.
I remember that same old frown,
But only this time it was a frown that was turned upside down.
He tried his best to put me through a test,
But the power of the Lord made him confess.
Now he's laid to rest.
Now that God has brought this to an end,
The man in the mirror has become my best friend.

Melvin Griggs

ARE MY EYES THE WINDOW TO MY SOUL?

If my eyes are the window to my soul,
tell me, the pain does it show?
If my eyes are the window to my soul,
can you tell that I mean stay when I say go?
If my eyes are the window to my soul,
why do you ask what I am thinking?
Shouldn't you already know?

Now tell me, my eyes, are they the window to my soul?

Deborah Moon

WHY THEM?

I was only 15 when I lost my two best friends.

As they revved their engines to see what car was faster, they came to the crest of the hill only to find innocent passengers coming their way.

As they punched the brakes, the tires started screaming and the metal of the two 2000-pound machines banged and twisted together. As the truck spins sideways, the voices from inside scream as the road comes running at them.

The windows burst out and then sparks flew from the hot roof going down the road like a train on the tracks. As one is ejected to the ditch, the other is pinned between the dirt and twisted metal. We run panicked following the eerie sounding voices in the distance of the two crying out for help.

As the lights from the departing helicopters faded, friends and family were left sobbing for them.

I will never forget my two best friends.

Matt Whitman

THE KNOCK

There's a knock at the door,
A knock I've heard before.
My heart starts racing.
My knees start to weaken.

But is my heart just playing games again?
Or could it be true?

Is it you there at the door?

Chasity Forrest

STARTING OVER

Sometimes as I lay in bed,
And so many thoughts are running through my head,
I wonder what's to become of me.
Has all of this happened because of my decisions, or was it destiny?
Will I go on to do well?
Will I find true love?
Only time will tell and God above.
Will my children ever forgive me? Can I forgive myself?
Am I going to do the right things and stay out of jail?
A thousand unanswered questions keeping me awake,
And I know there's a lot more than my own feelings at stake.
I pray for strength and courage to start all over again--
To be a better mother, daughter, sister, and friend.
So I gatner around me all the people I love and who love me.
I believe in my heart it's not too late, you see.
I'm going to go out in this world and be the best person I can be.
That is my goal for the year two thousand and three.

Shellie Van Driel

ALEX'S WORST DAY EVER

Alex was awakened by the pounding noises outside early that morning. There were construction workers building a house on the new lot next door. He stumbled out of bed. As he tripped over his slippers, the phone rang. It was his boss Mr. Burns, who needed Alex to pick up some doughnuts for the conference meeting they were having at 7:00 AM.

It was already 6:00 AM and Alex only had 1 hour to get ready and pick up the doughnuts before work. He opened the closet door, where he kept his linens, but there were no clean towels, so he grabbed the towel from the day before. It was lying on top of the clothes hamper; it was still damp, but it would have to do.

Alex turned the water on in the shower. He jumped in and the water was freezing cold. The pilot light must have gone out. He wrapped his damp towel around him, grabbed the matches, and walked down into the cold, dark basement, bending down on the hard concrete floor with his bare knees.

Finally, Alex was ready to take his shower. The warm water on his cold body was the best thing that had happened to him all morning. Alex dressed himself and then headed out the door. He walked down to the corner deli to buy some doughnuts. As he rounded the corner of the building, he could smell the fresh baked dough and the sweet smell of the icing on the cakes. Compared to the early part of his morning, things were going well. He boxed up the doughnuts and paid the cashier. As he turned to walk outside, something scared him. He threw the box of doughnuts in the air, then realized that it was only a dog. He reached to catch the doughnuts before they fell on the dirty floor. As two doughnuts fell out, the dog lunged in the doorway to catch them. Alex asked the cashier to give him two more doughnuts as he said, "That dog must have really been hungry to go through all that trouble to get some doughnuts."

Alex headed to work. As he walked into the office, Mr. Burns said, "Good morning."

Alex replied, "No. This was my worst morning ever."

Melissa Bartley

DETERMINATION

He walked ever so slowly down the hall on his own.
Every step was a struggle as he tried to go on,
Holding tight to his walker with his feeble old hands.
"Oh, you're lucky," he said with a tear in his eye,
"To be able to walk with such ease in your stride
And not have a walker or cane by your side.
As a boy, I remember, I could run like the wind,
Jump over hurdles and back again.
I carried my wife through the threshold of life
And played with my children all through the night.
Now my loved ones are gone, and I'm left alone
To mourn and to grieve for them on my own.
Please don't think bad of me because I'm old.
I still have my mind!
I still have my soul!"
Then ever so slowly, he turned around
To proceed down the hall where he was bound,
Holding tight to his walker with his feeble old hands.

Patricia A. Martin

ACCOMPLISHMENT

I have accomplished many things while being young. The ones that I am proudest of are having my children, holding a job for more than a year, and now going back to get my GED after quitting high school my senior year. These are the main things that I have accomplished so far at age twenty.

I have three beautiful children. The first child was born when I turned fifteen, a freshman in high school. By the time I was seventeen, I gave birth to another baby. The following year, I gave birth to my third child.

After having given birth to the last child, I went out looking for a job. When I got the job, I started as a waitress. When my shift got slow, they put me in the kitchen as a prep cook. I worked there for a full year and three months. I thought I wasn't going to last, but I did.

A few days after I quit my job, I chose to go back and get a GED. I'm hoping to pass the test so I can find a better job to support my children and me.

What I have accomplished so far is a lot for being young: having three children, holding a job as long as I did, and now going back to school after a couple of years. I hope to accomplish many more difficult situations that come my way. These are the ones I am proud of so far.

Tina McKenzie

WHAT NEXT?

Ever had one of those days? Let me tell you about mine. I was twelve minutes late for work, and the boss was standing by my work area, looking at his watch, and shaking his head. As I got closer, he started drilling me: "Must be nice having a job like yours, Lowe! Just come to work whenever you like?"

When I got to my work area, I looked him straight in the face and noticed he had toothpaste smeared on his face, and his shirt was buttoned up crooked. I tried the best I could to keep my composure, but I broke out with one of the biggest grins I think I've ever had. Well, you probably know what happened next. I spent the next hour packing up my tools. All the guys didn't think I should have gotten fired over that.

When I walked out to the truck, I noticed my keys hanging in the switch on the dash, and the doors just happened to be locked. While I was slim-jimming the door on my truck, the cops came up behind me, shoved my head against the glass. "Freeze! This is the police!" Nothing like a bloody nose, care of the local police department.

After about an hour of sitting in the back seat of the cruiser, and the guys I used to work with yelling "criminal" and "fugitive" when they came out for a smoke, the city's computer came back on line, and Officer Davis let me out of the cruiser. He told me he was sorry about the nose, and he was going to let me slide on my tags that had been expired for five months. I had forgotten all about it.

When I walked through the door at home, the telephone was ringing. It was the principal at the middle school. He was interested in knowing why my stepson had two packs of cigarettes and matches in his lunch sack. Oops, I must have grabbed the wrong bag when we walked out of the house this morning. Needless to say, no one was amused when I walked through the office door at school except my

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boy, who was glad he had the next three days off, thanks to good old me.

My wife was not amused, either. She was even less amused after opening the mail and finding out that I had deposited our bill money after 3:00 P.M. last Friday, and we had six bounced checks.

About 11:30 P.M. that night, I headed up the stairs. I looked in at the kid, as I always do, and went on to bed. As my head hit the pillow, I thought to myself, "I sure am glad this day is over." As I shut my eyes I realized that I had started filling the waterbed in the basement after the six o'clock news.

Ever had a day like that?

Tim Lowe

NEW EXPERIENCES

Experiencing the holiday season in the USA has been very fun for me. Many happy events take place between fall and winter. When I was in Japan, I didn't have any experiences with Thanksgiving and Halloween. Two years ago, I came to the USA for my husband's working assignment and have been able to join in these holidays.

My first experience with Halloween was very exciting. While I waited for children to come to my home, my heartbeat was fast. I paced excitedly behind the door. I was happy to give the disguised children a treat.

The last two Thanksgivings, I've had chances to join a Thanksgiving party at my apartment clubhouse. People of all ages were present, and some brought traditional food to the party. I tasted that food with pleasure. While I enjoyed the meal, I heard stories from Americans about their families. They looked so happy. From their stories, it seems that everybody always takes care of his/her family, even when they live far away from each other.

At Christmas time, I like to see all the traditions that people celebrate. In the USA, many houses are illuminated with lights. I really like to drive around my neighborhood to look at lots of beautifully decorated homes. Recently I heard that some Japanese people who've gone back to Japan from the USA have been starting to decorate their houses like the Americans. In my country, Japanese are in a holiday mood at Christmas time. We decorate with Christmas ornaments inside the house before Christmas, but we don't do as much decorating outside as the Americans.

I guess this holiday season will be the last that I can stay in the USA. After I go back to Japan, I think it'll be difficult to feel like this. It just happens in the USA; therefore, I'd like to have great experiences whenever I can.

Mamie Ito

WHICH IS WORSE?

Which is worse? A child who dies from miscarriage, stillbirth, crib death, car accident, fire, or murder?

Which is worse? A car accident on a slippery road that claims innocent lives, or a car accident where a car is speeding and the driver has been drinking?

Which is worse? A rape that is committed by someone you know, or a rape committed by a total stranger?

Which is worse? A missing child who's never been found, or a missing child who's found dead?

Which is worse? A murder caused by someone the authorities never find, or a murder where the killer is caught and punished?

Which is worse? A murderer's case that goes to trial, or a murder case that becomes a "plea bargain"?

Which is worse? Death by natural causes, or death by someone else's negligence?

Do you know which is worse?
The answer is all of them!

Karen Smith

GOD ANSWERS SPECIFIC PRAYERS

My name is John and I live in Milford, Ohio, and work at Live Oaks School. I attend Eastgate Baptist Church; my Pastor's name is Mark Wash.

Mark asked if the church could borrow a hundred chairs for a New Year's Eve service. When I picked up the chairs on December 30th, there was a light rain falling and the temperature was 57 degrees, which was not bad. When I got the chairs to church, they were wet and I had to dry them off. The next day we had our New Year's Eve service. That night the pastor asked when the chairs had to be back. I told him they needed to be back the next day because school would start January 2nd. He asked what time I would like to pick them up; I told him whenever the door could be unlocked. He said about 8 o'clock.

That night when I went home, the rain was still falling and the temperature was getting colder. I was not looking forward to moving the chairs in the cold, wet rain. When I got home and went to bed, I asked God for a window of opportunity for the rain to stop so I could get the chairs moved without getting wet. Each time I awoke, I could hear the rain and tell it was getting colder by the way the rain was hitting the house – the rain hits harder the colder it gets – and I would ask God again for a window of opportunity.

The next day when I got up, it was still raining. When I left the house at 7:25, it was raining harder than ever. I had to go to the school and get a two-wheel dolly to move the chairs. I left the school, went over to the church, and got there about 7:50. Two other men were coming around 8:00 to help me, and it was still raining hard.

I went inside to start stacking the chairs. When the other men got there, I went outside to tell them what I would like to do. The rain had stopped. I exclaimed, "Thank You, Lord!"

After telling the other men what I would like to do, we loaded the trucks and took them to the school. We got them loaded, unloaded, and back in place where they belonged in the school. When I went outside, it had started raining again.

This is how God answered my specific prayer!

John Berling

GOSSIP!!!

I don't have a face
Yet I'm in every place.

I don't have a heart
Yet I can tear lives apart.

I've caused innocent people to lose their jobs
And teenagers to sit around and sob.

I've caused grown men to shudder
And people to mutter.

I ruin lives, break up marriages
And cause long-lasting friendships to wither away.

I've caused grown men to cry into their pillows
And the strong to hang their heads in shame.

I've caused many a sleepless night
And others to walk around in fright.

Everywhere I go I create havoc and heartache
Even my name hisses...the word...GOSSIP!!!

So ask yourself,
Is it true?
Should I repeat it?

Patricia A. Martin

ARGUMENT

WOMAN—
Does indeed,
Women certainly do,
Belong on an altar.

My only argument with men is this:
Whether on that altar
We proudly stand
Or, docile, lay down our necks.

Leanna Gillespie

Family

Anonymous, Youngstown ABLE

I AM

I am pregnant.
I wonder what my baby will look like.
I hear people talking about my baby.
I see myself getting bigger.

I pretend that the baby looks like me.
I feel happy.
I touch my belly.
I worry about my unborn child.
I cry because I'm happy.
I am pregnant.

I understand my body is changing.
I say wow! This is so amazing.
I dream of playing with my baby.
I try to not worry.
I wish my baby was here.
I am pregnant.

Gabrielle Doherty

MY MOTHER

My mother, Margaret Lovell, had me on November 17, 1972, at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. She and her mother, Aletha Lovell, are from West Virginia. I remember my mom telling me about her mom living in a shack and walking great distances over a homemade bridge to school. Life must have been very hard for my grandma, because she suffered from nervous breakdowns at a very young age and would later in life be diagnosed as schizophrenic.

As a result of my grandma's illness, my mom became the caretaker of my aunt and uncles when she was a child herself. She tells me of times when there just wasn't enough to eat, and they moved constantly from place to place. She dearly loved my grandfather, Charles Lee Lovell, and talks about how handsome and charming he was, but I know he had an alcohol problem and wasn't in her life as much as she wanted him to be. I just wish I would have been able to know him, but he passed away when I was just a baby.

So, when my mom met my father and became pregnant with me, I'm sure she thought of it as her chance for happiness. But, alas, he was also an alcoholic, and a drug addict, and became very abusive. She finally got away from him.

What I value most about my mother is the way she cares about people with all her heart. Sometimes this is hard on her because she feels other people's emotions, especially children. I remember she used to watch those commercials about those kids in other countries who were starving and cry, something I find myself doing too. I remember asking my father to let me sponsor one of those children instead of getting a Christmas present one year. We sent for the information and everything, but he never followed through on it. I always felt somehow guilty over that, silly as it may seem.

I know she cared about my education and did what she could to excite me about going to school. Every morning

before we caught the bus, she would make my sister and me anything we wanted for breakfast, my favorite being peanut butter pancakes! She had a thousand ways to make pancakes, but it was more than the food, it was the love that came with it.

I remember her taking us on a bus to McCrory's, a five-and-dime store that used to be downtown, and how we used to love the escalators and would go up and down them over and over again. One time, my sis and I got our pictures taken there, and they used ours as an advertisement and set it in the front of the store. I remember how happy Mom was, and how beautiful she was when she smiled like she did that day. My mom was so proud, but she reminded us that beauty is only skin deep, and that it's important to work on ourselves from the inside out.

I've never seen my mother get so angry with us as she did when we lied to her. She had a strict "honesty is the best policy" theory, and if we told the truth, no matter how bad it was, she was always much easier on us.

Another time, my sister and I got caught stealing at J.C. Penney's, and the police brought us home. My mother went into a rage. We got whipped and grounded, but I remember the hardest part was the hurt and shame on my mother's face. It is something I have never forgotten, and I never stole after that.

I believe my mother instilled some strong values in me. She taught me honesty, respect for myself and others, a love for other people and consideration of their feelings, not to steal from others but to give, and that real beauty comes from the heart and soul and can never be faked.

I grew up trying to be a good daughter to my mother, always sensing a sadness deep inside her. My stepfather was also abusive, but he never hit my mother, and I knew that, in his way, he loved me, my sister, and my mother. They had my brother Anthony, and we all adored his chubby little cheeks and big blue eyes, and my mother was happy for a while.

But the sadness came back for my mom—if it ever really left. I have spent all my life looking forward to the happy moments in her life, and far too few causing them. My sister and my baby brother and I have put her through some hard times, but it was worst for her when she didn't know where we were or what we were doing. I regret the heartaches I have caused her. I'm going to try to change my life so that I can try to give my mom some happiness. I want to see her change from that beautiful but sad and haunted woman she seems sometimes. I want her to get back that smile.

I love you, Mom. Thank you for being my mother.

Shellie Van Driel

GRANDMA'S GIFT

My most memorable childhood toy was given to me on my seventh birthday. It was a brown teddy bear in a sitting position. It had a pink toboggan with a fuzzy pink ball at the end of it. The hat also had green print on it. The bear was wearing a long-sleeved sweater that was pink with green print on it like the hat.

I remember I was really sick on that birthday because I had a bad ear infection. My aunts, uncles, and cousins were there when my favorite grandma, who has since passed away, called me to her. I felt my face go red because everyone got really quiet and was watching me. She sat me on her lap. Then she reached down to the floor and pulled up the bear.

It was my favorite toy because my grandma gave it to me. I slept with the bear every night, and then one night I fell asleep with pink gum in my mouth. When I awoke my bear was covered in the pink gum. My mom said she was going to get the gum off and I never saw the bear again.

I am twenty years old now. I have been given a lot of teddy bears since, but that one bear was my most memorable childhood toy.

Joyce Jeffries

VANISH

His name is Steve, the love of my life.
Chemistry is what we had.
And a baby soon to come.

A family you said we'd be.
But the only family that I see...
Is a mother and her baby.

Now you're with her in her house.
What about your responsibility?
What about your vow?

Now you call, after so long.
But what we need most of all...
Is for you to vanish and be gone.

Jessica Westdyke

MANGO DAY

I could say that this is one of the most vivid memories I have of my father. I can remember his strong, beautiful hand and the way he used to handle his Chesterfield cigarette, smoking it after our "Pre-Christmas Mango Early Dinner."

For my siblings and me, the mango season was a big event. It was around middle December, just a few weeks before Christmas, when small and sweet mangoes come out and you can see street vendors selling the seasonal fruit.

Our Christmas air was of a very particular kind, a mixture of tropical and traditional. Imagine all that mango flavor and its scent mixed with freshly cut cypress Christmas tree smell, added to the unique aroma of Christmas ornaments that have been kept in storage a whole year. The house had to be ready for Christmas by December 16 when the Novena for Baby Jesus started. We used to dress up our house for Christmas. It was wonderful because each year we had the tree and the Nativity in a different place. This year the living room, last year the family room, the year before, the den; the year before that one, a different corner of the living room, and so on. However, certain ornaments had their own place, like the one Mom used for the dining table. It was a blue glass bowl filled with some of the Christmas bright glass ball ornaments left after the tree was fully dressed up. I specially remember this bowl because it shined beautifully with the reflections of the ceiling lamp, like sun-rays spreading all over the big dining table, so big that it well accommodated ten or twelve people. On Mango Day, the bowl and the shining rays would go to rest on the cupboard for a few hours.

Our much expected annual Mango ritual began when Father went to the big fresh fruit street market with one or two of us to choose a wooden box with the nicest mangoes we could find to take home. Those boxes looked huge to me: they contained about 150 or 200 mangoes.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

I remember a clear, sunny December afternoon: I was eight, maybe nine. It had to be a weekend because on weekdays my father left early in the morning and usually came home late at night. That day Father took my sister Monse and me to the market; it was a short drive from our house, so we came back for lunch, with our nice, big box of full ripe mangoes. Once the big box was emptied and all the mangoes washed and cleaned multiple times, Mom would take two big crystal bowls and place them on the center of the dinner table. One of the bowls was full of mangoes and the other one was empty.

Then Mom would tighten a big white napkin around our necks. We all sat extremely quietly, trying to choose the best mango from the crystal bowl using only our eyes.

The big moment was yet to come: Dad would choose the biggest serrated kitchen knife and take it along with the wooden cutting board to the dining room. He then dressed himself with a white cotton chef apron and one of our biggest and always plaid kitchen towels around his neck. He would then sit and grab the mango I had chosen. It would probably take him half a minute or so, which seemed like the longest minute of my life, to examine the mango's hardness, choose a spot next to the seed, and make the first of two vertical cuts as close as possible to the seed. Whatever mango you chose, it had to be hard enough to bear a knife cut, otherwise, all of the pulp would come out at the first cut.

After all these years, I can still hear in my mind the smooth, slow, and sweet sound of the knife sliding over the mango pulp. At the same time, a thick juice would come out of the mango, a drop at a time, very slowly, along with the strong smell of sweet mangoes. Father then would take the three mango pieces, one after another, and place them on the first pile of plates next to his left arm and hand it to me.

"Is your next mango already chosen?" he would ask. And Lula, then Monse, Mena and Galo, would choose their mangoes to be eaten. By the time Galo was ready to eat his first mango, I would be ready for my second one.

We had a very particular way of eating these mangoes. The cut done by Dad left the mango like a potato skin overflowed with mango pulp. Therefore, it was easy to take out big bites of pulp using your front teeth. Once the skins were empty, the next step was to lick all sides of the seed, as if we wanted to take out the entire soul of the mango. This was the stage when all those small mango hairs tried to stick between our front teeth.

Grandma and Mom did not like mangoes that much so they would only eat one or two. They used to eat mangoes in a different way, cutting a small slit on top of the mango and with their hands smoothing the mango until the juice started to come out from the slit. Then they would place their mouth on the slit and start to suck until all the thick juice came out. Obviously, this was a much cleaner way to eat a mango, but they missed all the fun of having many small mango hairs between their teeth.

When our plates were full, we would throw the remnants in the second big crystal bowl and get ready for the next mango.

And so, we would spend our afternoon eating mango after mango until the last one was gone. We gathered around our big dinner table with everyone talking at the same time, Mom making us laugh with her jokes and contagious laughter while we'd be chatting and having lots of fun.

After the hundred and some mangoes were gone, and the bowls had been emptied many times, Mom would clean the table. Meanwhile, the five of us should be in line in front of the kitchen faucet, our faces and hands ready to be washed a couple of times by Grandma until all the thin mango hairs were gone.

Once we were clean, we would help Mom and Grandma to set up the dinner table for a small supper. Mom used to have her dark coffee with hot croissants, Grandma her coffee latte also with croissants and the five of us tall glasses of milk with our croissants smeared with lots of butter and guava jelly.

Father then would get from the pantry a big bottle of sparkling water and pour some of its contents into his special glass. While he waited for some of the bubbles to be gone from the sides of the glass, he would light his Chesterfield, smoking very slowly and enjoying it as if he wished the pleasure of the act of smoking would last forever, handling the cigarette with his beautiful, strong hand.

I love that particular memory of my father, cutting mangoes for us and later smoking his Chesterfield and drinking his sparkling water very slowly, while the rest of us seven made our bets on which sparkling water bubble would last longer.

The prize for the winner was usually the right to have two ice cream cones instead of just one on our next trip to the ice-cream parlor. That was the end of our annual Mango Day. Surely we would have another one with the late mangoes, by the end of January, but this one never had all the fun and magic of the one before Christmas.

After all these years, I still do not know why I especially remember that particular Mango Day and my Father's hand image as fresh as if it were yesterday.

In the end, I do know something for sure. These cheerful memories of my childhood come to my mind from time to time, as a clear reminder of how those delicate and special threads called family rituals can be tightly woven. So tightly, that somehow across time, they become that much beloved tapestry called family closeness. It certainly lasts forever.

Monica Pazmino

I AM

I am a single woman who is a mother all of the time. I wash clothes. I work fulltime outside of my home 6 or 7 days a week. I cook; I clean; I do laundry. I see that the dishes get washed, and I do whatever needs to be done to take care of my two girls.

I am a woman who is also a father all of the time. I cut the grass; I pay the bills; I do all the shopping; I do yard work, and I do odd jobs. I'm a do-it-all mom.

I am a woman who is also an Easter Bunny helper. In the middle of the night, I get up after the children are asleep, and I arrange two baskets. I set them in the living room for my children to find the next morning.

I am a woman who is also a tooth fairy helper. Whenever a tooth is lost, I sneak into my children's room and help get the lost tooth out from under their pillow, and I put money in place of the lost tooth.

I am Santa Claus's helper on Christmas Eve. I stuff their stockings with fun things. I wrap any presents that haven't been wrapped yet. I bake Christmas goodies, and I do whatever needs to be done for Christmas day.

I am a woman who is also a caregiver to my children. I encourage, inspire, praise, punish, correct, teach, share, listen, and make mistakes. I'm not a perfect parent by far, but I give them what they need the most. I'm there for them.

I am a woman who has become a sports fan. I go to my children's ball games, and I root for their teams. I'm the most supportive fan my children have. I don't feel that I have

enough time to go to their games, but if I don't go watch, nobody else will. So when I can, I go.

I am one person trying to be everything my children need. Sometimes I'm torn between two roles. I am tired a lot of the time, but I do what I feel needs to be done. I'm not a part-time parent; I'm a full-time parent. When my children are all grown up, I can honestly say I did everything I could to raise them right. My reward for all my hard work is the best gift of all. I have two wonderful children who love me very much.

Karen Smith

LIFE'S UNTOLD MEDICINES

"Life's Untold Medicines" is all about the many years of my life from a young child to the adult I am today. I was born in Manistique Michigan, Hiawatha Township, Schoolcraft County in 1929.

I can still remember all the home remedies my grandma used for medicine. When I was two years old I had diarrhea. It used to be called summer complaint when I was a child. Grandma used a cup of flour tied up in a white cloth that had been boiled for three hours. She would remove it from the cook stove, cut it open and remove the hard cooked flour. She then put it in a cup, added some cream and sugar and fed it to me. This old-fashioned remedy saved my life.

At the age of six, I jumped off a stool and fell into a pile of broken glass – feet first – cutting the bottom of my right foot. Grandma put my foot in a pan of water to wash the wound and dried it. She then put a piece of fat bacon on the cuts and tied a white cloth around my foot until it was completely healed.

I can also remember the time a neighbor's little girl was playing in a shed and she fell on her daddy's crosscut saw. She cut her knee wide open. Her mother picked her up and carried her to my grandma's house. Grandma took the tobacco that she was chewing right out of her mouth and placed it on the cut, and tied a white bandage around it until it healed.

These are just a few of the home remedies that my grandma used to use. She also used red perspicuity mixed with lard to kill head lice. Spirit of turpentine was used on minor cuts. If you had a boil or skin infection, Grandma would use bittersweet berries or plantain leaf. She would find the berries in the woods on a wild growing vine or she would gather plantain leaf from the yard. She also used coal oil, or what we call kerosene today, for the croup.

I am now seventy-three years old. I have fond memories of my grandma. She had many home remedies that I still use today.

Ida Osborn

LOOK AT ME!

Look at me Mommy, look at me now
As I jump from this tree
And fall to my knees.
Oh Mommy, please, oh please look at me.

You look at Sissy as she plays with her dolls
As she walks from the house into the yard
With love in your eyes and a smile on your face
You used to love me until she took my place.

I know she is cuter and smaller than me
But can't you once more
Just look at me!

You look at him with tears in your eyes
A smile on your face
And love in your heart.

I know he doesn't care
I can see through his heart
That he would be happy if we were apart!
You look at him, a smile on your face
You used to love me until he took my place.

I know he is tall and I am so small
He tells you I'm mean and won't mind at all
It's not that I'm mean, I don't mean to be
But I need your attention, any at all.

Do you know, Mommy, of the feelings I have
The pain in my heart
The dreams that I have?
Do you know, Mommy, or do you care
That I'm your little boy alone

And so scared?

Please, Mommy, please, oh please look at me!

Patricia A. Martin

A TRIBUTE TO MOM

My mom is very unique and special to all of us. It is hard to describe her overall personality since there is so much to say. She always has a comeback for what we say and can be serious at the same time. Mom is always there to give us advice and lend a helping hand.

I have to say I was not the easiest child for her to raise. In fact, I was the hardest to raise, for I had a mean streak a mile long, and I'm stubborn as a mule. For example, if there was something I wanted or wanted to do, nothing would stand in my way. This caused many arguments and disagreements during my teenage years.

Being the youngest by seventeen years made life lonely for me. Mom and dad made sure I was well taken care of, and they made it a priority to give plenty of attention to me. This was often a thankless job. For example, there came a time when I was a teenager and my brother tried to get mom to give me up for all of the trouble I caused. Like me, nothing would stand in the way of what she wanted or thought important. She obviously wanted me and thought I was important because mom told him she would not give up on her own child. For this I greatly thank her. My mother has helped me in more ways than I could imagine. She has consistently and lovingly helped me financially, emotionally, and just by being there.

Mom is very family oriented and set in her ways. This combination makes her sometimes painfully blunt remarks and suggestions all the more meaningful. She lets everyone know what she thinks by lending experienced advice that is presented in options, enabling us to choose our own path in life. This is very dignifying and respectful. Most importantly, it has taught me the value of learning from my mistakes.

Growing up I did not like to hear her tell stories of her childhood or my older siblings' childhood. Now I could sit for hours and not hear enough of them. The life she has led

and experiences she has had are fascinating to me. She is a strong and amazing person. During the course of the past two years, I have seen my mom struggle with a disease that significantly impairs her vision. My mom has lost all but the side view of her eyesight. Being strong willed and dependent, she does not like to ask for our help, whether it be to drive her to the store or ask if the oven is set where it needs to be. This is difficult because I am so willing to help her as she has made the world such a better place for me.

Mom absolutely refuses for her disability to get the best of her. This is inspiring to watch and her attitude is encouraging.

I could go on forever on how great she really is. She has been such a wonderful person and role model to me. As a 51-year resident of Morrow, Ohio, she is the person I respect the most in Ohio, and the whole world.

Thelma L. Bennett

GRANDMOTHERS

Grandmothers are
Cast iron skillets,
Rigidly coiffed hair,
Fluttery hands,
And flowery sachet.

Grandmothers are
Bingo players, churchgoers,
And built-in baby sitters
Carrying birthday presents and Christmas cash.

Grandmothers have
Too many breakables,
Musty smelling pillows,
Faded photographs,
And a lot of free time.

Grandmothers are
Benign strangers
Who have had their identities absorbed
By greeting-card sentimentalism
And Americana stereotypes.

Grandmothers are
Loved with duty,
If not with fervor.

How unfortunate
We've lost the art.
Mislaid the word.

Matriarch.

Leanna Gillespie

Love and Inspiration

Artwork created by Jessica McCall

LOVE

Love is gentle,
Love is kind.
Love is giving-
all the time.
Love is patient,
Love is caring.
Love is truth
and love is sharing.
Love is hope.
Love is pain.
Love urges you
to try again.
Love is gracious,
Love is glad.
Love keeps on going
though you are sad.
Love is honest,
Love is fair.
Love is a prayer
by those who care.
Love is diamonds,
Love is jade.
Love is silver
that will not fade.
Love can't be bought.
Love can't be sold.
Love comes from God
"a gift from God."

Kim Matthews

IN MY EYES

When I look at your face, I don't see wrinkles. I see the remainders of the laughter we've shared.

When you forget things, I don't see a fading mind. I see a mind that's filled with priceless stories and memories.

When I see the cane you walk with, I don't see an invalid. I see someone I can finally keep up with.

When I look at your hands, I don't see shaking. I see the help and guidance they've given me.

And when I look into your eyes through the glasses you wear, I see what I always have -- unconditional love.

Karol Kubasek

TWO LOVERS IN LOVE

Do you love me?
Do you love me, or do you not?
You told me once before; I forgot.
I do believe God above
Created you for me to love.
I have a heart so tender and true,
But know it's gone from me to you,
And when we die we'll go in pairs.
I'll meet you at those heavenly stairs,
And if you're not there on Judgment Day,
I'll know you went the other way.
And just to prove my love is true,
I'll go to hell to be with you.

Angela Hamilton

A WOMAN WHO MADE ME THINK

I once worked in a nursing home where I met a positively wonderful woman named Elsie Barnhart. Elsie had cancer in her throat, and it spread throughout her body. Now, you would think that Elsie would be mean and nasty, but she always had a smile on her face and showed concern for everybody but herself. She never complained as long as I knew her.

Once, I was having a really bad day. I went into her room, and Elsie knew there was something wrong. Elsie said, "What's wrong dear? Are you having a bad day?" as pleasant as usual. I couldn't take it anymore! I said, "How can you be so pleasant all the time? I've never seen you sad or anything."

Elsie then said to me, "Honey, I don't have very much longer to live, so I try to enjoy what little time I have left."

That comment really touched me. Here is this woman who is bed-bound, and you think has nothing good going on, and she taught me something a lot of people never figure out. It doesn't matter if you're healthy or not; be grateful for what you do have.

Misty Shook

I IDOLIZE

I idolize the fallen soldiers, whose blood is on our flag,
For they gave the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we all have.
I idolize the rippling sound of a clear mountain stream.
I idolize the individuality of everyone's American dream.
I idolize any human being, who runs head on into a fire,
Who doesn't even know the person, fueled only by desire.
I idolize the vibrant colors of the sun's nightly descent.
I idolize the authority of our president.
I idolize a person, who knows they may get shot at any time,
They risk their life everyday to rid my neighborhood of crime.
I idolize the grace of the soaring eagle.
I idolize the cuteness of a baby beagle.
I idolize a person, who is willing to be a volunteer,
They don't get any money, but they give a lot of tears.
I idolize the patience of a mother.
I idolize the unpredictability of the weather.
I idolize the people I have asked to give me advice;
Although I may not always have used it, the gestures sure were nice.
I idolize the evolution of watching your own baby grow.
I idolize the distinct, blanketing change of winter's first snow.
I idolize the courage and fortitude of the terminally ill,
Who are forced to trust their shortened lives to a doctor or a pill.
I idolize the uncertain infinity of time.
I idolize the love of the woman who chose to be mine.
I idolize my friends and my family,
For they all have had a part in influencing me.
I idolize the man, who gave his only son so he can continually forgive.
I idolize that man because I cannot see or touch him, but I know he lives.
I idolize the spirited freedom of animals in the wild.
I idolize the innocence I can see in the eyes of a child.

Michael Ballentine

MY TEACHERS

I have always been told that there are few people in your life that you can really depend on or look up to.

I have had the opportunity to meet and come to know two ladies that I truly care about. These two ladies are my teachers, Karen and Mary Jane.

Both ladies are wonderful at their professions. While one works hard at keeping up with the paper work, the other is busy coming up with new ideas to help all the students pass their GED.

These two ladies have completely different personalities. One is very good at being neat, while the other one is not so neat – but they always manage to get the job done for all their students.

I wrote this essay to inspire and encourage my two teachers for all that they do and for all their hard work. I am truly thankful for all they do for me and others. They are truly a blessing.

Although there are not many people in this world that I can depend on and look up to, I am so glad that I can personally say that I can depend on my two teachers, Karen and Mary Jane. One of my prayers as I grow in my life is to be a little more like them – someone who is dependable and cares about other people and their needs.

Lisa Wright

A WOMAN WITH A VOICE FOR CHILDREN

I want to tell you about a remarkable woman for whom I have the utmost respect. Her name is Cathy Crawford. If you're from Fairfield County, Ohio, and you have children, chances are you've met Cathy, or at least have heard of her name.

I first met Cathy at a Fairfield Association for the Education of Young Children meeting. Later, at an Even Start Task Force meeting where I was the parent representative, I saw Cathy again. After our meeting, Cathy wanted to talk to me to see how I liked being a student in the Even Start Program. While we were talking, someone whom I thought was more important than I was, wanted to talk with Cathy. She politely asked the woman to wait since she was having a conversation with me. That made me feel like I was the most important person in the world. I'm a student in one of Cathy's programs, and she told a colleague to wait! That was when I realized that she not only cares about our children, but also about adults. Cathy has a genuine interest in anything you say, no matter how silly it may seem.

The more early education activities that I go to, the more I see Cathy. At every early childhood program that I have attended, Cathy is there. She has been working with children since 1970. She has been a teacher, a substitute teacher, director/teacher at the YMCA, a kindergarten teacher for seven years, and since then, a coordinator for Lancaster pre-schools and Title I.

Cathy is a member of numerous organizations representing children. She is a member of the Fairfield Association for the Education of Young Children and the Children's Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Fairfield Family, Adult, and Children First Council. Cathy is also on the Fairfield Health Advisory Council, the Safe Kids Coalition, the Family Festival Committee, and the Even Start Task Force. Cathy teaches a class every winter quarter at

Ohio University-Lancaster on administration of early childhood programs. She is also on the Ohio University-Lancaster Advisory Board and The Ohio State University Extension Advisory Board for Families.

Cathy is truly a strong voice for children in our community. Cathy is committed to making Fairfield County a better place for children. I really think that it is time that Cathy Crawford gets the respect and recognition that she has worked hard for, but also deserves.

Misty Shook

RACISM

Although many might think that Dr. Martin Luther King's dream has come true, I have to disagree with this. In our nation, there is still a lot of racism, hatred, and discrimination. Also, there is much stereotyping in the world. I also feel some people have not accepted equal rights.

In my heart I don't think this nation has lived up to its creed. Racism and hatred is still big in a lot of states. African-Americans have still been beaten, hung from trees, and dragged by cars. Many other races have been rejected and ridiculed in a lot of different ways.

Then there's still the subject of stereotyping. Stereotyping is just as awful as racism. People should not stereotype others. The way a person talks, dresses, wears his hair, or the color of his skin should not define that person. I have learned over the years that if people stop this behavior, they might learn something from other races.

Finally, I don't think that a lot of people feel equal whether they're white, black, yellow, blue, or green. This goes for men, women, and children alike. Some people are being mistreated at home, in the work place, in school, in sports, or just walking down the street in their own town.

So in closing, I think Dr. King's dream has not come true. A man had a dream that one day everyone would be equal and love one another as a nation. A man died for that dream. With all the racism, hatred, and unfairness in the world, I think that some are still waiting for it to come true. It almost makes me wonder if a good life was wasted.

Tonya Dukes

MY TESTIMONY IN RHYME

There are many loves that come and go
But there is one for sure, I know.

I love the Lord with all my heart
And from Him I will never part.

He found me when I was broken and bad
And this made Him very sad.

I searched for fifteen years for something to ease my fears
And then one day my fears turned to tears.

I had found something (not in drink, drugs, or smoke)
But in something solid and full of hope.

My Lord had found me. My tears He did dry
And promised He'd always be nearby.

He's just a prayer away and that's why I love Him.
He saved me from my sin,
Now my future is bright and not so grim.

Tammie Boling

HE WAS HER ANGEL

She saw him standing across the street with the light of the sunset just barely kissing the outline of his body. His dark hair glistened in the light. It looked like droplets of dew on a web. He looked at total ease with dark and warm eyes. She wondered if maybe, just maybe, he could be an angel or a guiding spirit.

She stood just watching him for a few seconds. It seemed like forever. It was almost like they were frozen in time. He smiled at her, and she grinned back. His face beamed when he smiled. Surely he had to be some higher being. She felt weak just looking at him.

Then suddenly he started to cross the street towards her. She just about passed out. She thought, "Oh my lord, is my time up? What do I say to him? Maybe he's not coming for me."

Out of nowhere came a white van. She tried to yell, "Watch out," but it was too late. Her higher being was hit and thrown 3 feet. She couldn't believe what she was witnessing. How could this be happening to an angel or higher being?

She ran to him. He lay there twisted and bloody. She thought higher beings did not bleed. She knelt down beside him with tears running down her face. He reached up with his right hand and said, "I knew you were an angel. That's why I crossed the street to talk with you."

She couldn't believe what she was hearing. "An angel, me? But you're supposed to be my angel."

She looked down at him with tearful stinging eyes. Then he asked, "Are you here to take me where I need to be?"

She sat there for a moment and gently shook her head and said, "Yes, I'm here to take you home." While silently choking on the words as she spoke them. She sweetly smiled at him as he told her he was glad she was there. Then she watched him draw his last breath. She still couldn't believe what she was watching. Was she in a movie or a book? She sat crying and feeling at ease. He did turn out to be her angel. He helped her gain her faith again. The person she saw that day reminded her that there are angels in everyone.

Gabrielle Doherty

Author Biographies

FUMIKO ADAIR (p. 17)
I was born and raised in Japan and now I live in Cuyahoga Falls with my American husband and our only daughter, Sarah. Since I have been in the Self Even Start program, I have learned that learning is fun and easy. This program gives me the privilege of entering this writing contest. It is an exciting reward to see my writings published!

LAAT ARIER (pp. 39, 41)
A survivor from war-torn Sudan, Laat has a powerful, profound story to share which inspires readers to reflect on the significance and repercussions of 9/11/01.

MICHAEL BALLENTINE (pp. 123, 136)
I am a 29-year-old husband and father. I would like to thank my wife Sandra and her family for their love and encouragement for my accomplishment. I would also like to thank my daughter Ellie, for her innocent affection, as well as my family for their support. This is a lifelong dream for me, and I now hope, with my renewed interest in writing, this is a springboard into something bigger. Remember winners never quit and quitters never win.

LILLIE BARGAINER (p. 62)
As soon as Lillie learned about the Ohio Writers' Conference, she was most anxious to share her story, and what a story unfolded! Such inspiration to all!

MELISSA BARTLEY (pp. 61, 81)
My name is Melissa Bartley. I am 23 years old, born August 25, 1979. I have 2 beautiful children, ages 2 and 3, and a loving significant other who supports me 100%. My passion in life is to help others in their time of need.

RESHAUNDA BEAL (p. 28)
Reshaunda is 27 years old and was born in Hamilton County, Ohio. She attends the YWCA LEARN program.

THELMA L. BENNETT (p. 113)

JOHN BERLING (p. 89)
I am a husband of 31 years, a father of a boy who was born on my birthday and a daughter who was daddy's girl, and a grandfather of a very smart grandson. I am a man of faith who trusts in God to help me day by day. I attend Live Oaks ABLE class and hope to get my GED soon.

TAMMIE BOLING (p. 128)
I am a 52-year-old woman. One night I had trouble sleeping because the words of my poem kept running through my mind. I couldn't sleep until I got up and wrote them down. Returning to school has re-sparked my interest in writing. When I was younger I used to love to try to write. Through the years my confidence got shattered. I am so grateful to have my confidence return and to begin to find joy in my ability to write.

SHEYLA CARABALLO (p. 71)

CANDY CHILDS (p. 22)
I have been coming to O.R.C. for 3 years, and I am a grandma of 3 kids. I am very glad to be a part of this Writers' Conference and am honored to be here.

CAROLYN CLARK (p. 64)
My name is Carolyn Clark. I am a student at the Martin Center. I have a 10-year-old son, Marcqualis. I am a native of Canton, OH. I enjoy learning new skills. My son and I enjoy composing and singing together.

WILLIAM CONWAY (p. 139)

CRYSTAL CSUHTA (p. 69)
I am a twenty-nine year old woman. I am married and have one son. I am a hard-working American and believe that all people were created equal in God's eyes.

MARIE DAVIS (p. 26)
My name is Marie Davis, and I am going to school to get my GED. I have two kids—a boy and a girl. I am a grandma with four grandkids.

MICHELE DEVORE (p. 33)

MIROSLAVA DEYNEGA (p. 50)
My name is Miroslava Deynega. I have been in the USA for six years. I'm married. I have two children, a son and a daughter. I like the USA.

GABRIELLE DOHERTY (pp. 97, 129)

TONYA DUKES (p. 127)

CHASITY FORREST (p. 79)

LEANNA GILLESPIE (pp. 92, 115)

WILLIAM GORDON (p. 4)

MELVIN GRIGGS (p. 75)
I, Melvin Griggs, was inspired to write poems by God.

ANGELA HAMILTON (p. 121)

VICKIE A. HARGRAVES (p. 6)
My name is Vickie Hargraves. I am a student at Live Oaks to further my education. I love to write. I have been working on writing a book that I hope will turn out to be a great success. I am a five-year winner in the Beginnings books. I would like to thank my teacher Marty Lopinto, Live Oaks, Kent State, and the OLRC and everyone who helped to make this project possible.

RON HECKERT (p. 47)

CYRUS HENRY (p. 31)

AARON HIGHLEY (p. 27)

LISA HOLMES (p. 67)
I am married to a wonderful man, and I have two beautiful children. I have never written anything longer than a paragraph in my life because fear held me back. I have taken the steps to get help, and I have found the courage to write. It has been very therapeutic, and I am very proud of myself.

MAMIE ITO (pp. 40, 87)
I cam here from Japan two and a half years ago for my husband's work assignment. I think I'm a very lucky person, because I can keep doing something to learn in this class.

JOYCE JEFFRIES (p. 101)
I am a 21-year-old mother of two beautiful boys, and I wrote this piece to remind people that giving something to someone, no matter how big or small, can leave a good impact on someone's life. So keep the gift of giving going.

KAROL KUBASEK (p. 120)

ELLA LOWE (p. 30)
I'm hard-working, love my flowers, and enjoy good weather. I also like meeting new people. I enjoy my quiet time very much.

TIMOTHY D. LOWE (p. 85)
Just when you think things are going well, here comes your little black cloud. My bad day experience "What Next?" shares one of my worst days with readers. I was born October 1957 in Columbus, Ohio. I enjoy short stories in English literature and believe in life-long learning. Presently I am working on an undergrad degree at OU-Lancaster. I reside in the beauty of rural southeastern Ohio.

JERMAINE MARTIN (p. 56)

PATRICIA A. MARTIN (pp. 83, 91, 111)
I was born in Lexington, KY. I grew up in Dayton, Ohio. I went to Southwestern College of Business and got my GED. I went to Miami Jacobs College for a short period. I have four children. I want to go to nursing school to be an LPN, and that is why I was attending the ABLE classes.

KIMBERLY MATTHEWS (pp. 57, 119)
I'm twenty years old, and I have a two-year-old daughter named Caitlin. I've been writing since I was twelve years old.

CLINT McKEE (p. 23)

TINA McKENZIE (p. 84)

TRACY MILLER (p. 65)
My name is Tracy Miller and I am 32 years old, married with 4 children. My love for reading and writing is something I have always remembered even from an early age. I hope my poem invoked thoughts and ... a greater love for others.

DEBORAH MOON (p. 77)

FERNANDO NEGRETE (p. 70)
My name is Fernando Negrete. I have lived in the USA for about 10 years. I am proud to live in the United States because this country gave me an opportunity to have a better life. Everyday I want to improve my knowledge for a better future.

MARTHA O'CONNOR (p. 131)
I'm 50 years old and have 3 sons. I have been married for 27 years to James O'Connor, a good man. I'm the director of Hands of Jesus at Gospel Temple. Our pastor's name is Tim Hume. My ministry is city outreach, P.T.L.

IDA E. OSBORN (p. 109)
I am just a plain old-fashioned girl (73 years old) trying to better myself with a high school education. I want to go on to college to be a dress designer.

ANGIE MARIE PARKS (p. 133)
Angie is 28 years old and was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. She attends the YWCA LEARN program.

MONICA PAZMINO (p. 103)
I am from Quito, Ecuador. I came to the U.S. with my husband and our sons in 1999. Since then I've been trying to improve my English language skills and learn as much as possible about American life and culture. I discovered that writing allows my thoughts, feelings and imagination to come out freely, and I like it very much. It was a wonderful surprise to know that my story was selected. I am so happy about it.

CONREL PENLAND (p. 5)
I am a 64-year-old, single male determined to get my GED and participate in the graduation ceremony wearing cap and gown. I began attending classes in September of 2002 and by the grace of God will complete my studies soon and be ready to take and pass the GED test.

JEAN PISCITANI (p. 45)
I am a 47-year-old mother of two teenaged children. I enjoy reading, writing, and gardening.

CAROL RUDDER (pp. 3, 12)
Originally from Canada, I was raised in the Chicago area. I have been living in Ohio for 35 years. I have two children, four grandchildren and one great grandson.

LELAND SALYER (p. 59)

DALE D. SHERMAN (p. 9)
I have been a student at the Medina Project LEARN for six years. I have become involved in student groups throughout Ohio and the nation.

MISTY SHOOK (pp. 122, 125)
Misty is in Even Start, which is a Family Literacy Program. With the help of Even Start, Misty is a parent representative on the Even Start Task Force, and is also a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Misty's goal is to continue her education and to become a better writer. Misty is also a single mother of a three-year-old son, James.

KAREN SMITH (pp. 25, 88, 107)
I have been writing for 25 years. I have been published in Beginnings every year so far. I'm a working mother of two lovely girls who inspire my writing. They are always proud of my accomplishments.

TAMARA SMITH (p. 35)
Tamara Smith is a longtime resident of the Franklinton area of Columbus, Ohio. She and Ken, her husband of seven years, live on Meek Avenue. They share their duplex with their two cats, Lilo and Stitch.

CARROL A. STARCHER (p. 10)
I have been at O.R.C. now going on 4 years, and if it would not be here, I would not be able to read or spell. The teachers here have brought me along so I can teach my great grandchildren.

DESHAWN STEED (p. 58)
I am 27 years old. I've lived in Dayton, Ohio, all my life. I've always had the desire to write poetry. I want to be the best Gold allows me to be. I hope my work helps those who can relate to enable themselves to change from within.

BEVERLY TINSLEY (p. 53)
Because I am a student who struggled with a learning disability, I have a concern for others who have this problem. I was able to graduate from high school and attend college. I have invented a board game that is geared toward students with learning disabilities.

SHELLIE VAN DRIEL (pp. 80, 98)
I am a native Daytonian. I love reading, writing, movies, jet skiing, animals, travel, and new challenges. I plan to get my GED, go to college, and work in a helping profession.

DOUGLAS VELAZCO (p. 43)

DARIA VOYTILLA (p. 93)

JESSICA M. WESTDYKE (p. 102)
I am a single parent with one child. I obtained my GED diploma through Canton City Schools. I am now enrolled at AEC Technical School in the medical assisting program. I enjoy writing and am grateful for this opportunity to have something published. This will encourage me to keep on writing (a book someday, I hope)!

MATT WHITMAN (p. 78)
My name is Matt Whitman. I live in Dennison, Ohio, and hope to earn my GED this spring. After that I am considering joining the military.

LISA WRIGHT (pp. 43, 124)
My name is Lisa Wright and I am 39 years old. I have two boys, ages 17 and 12, and I have been married to my husband for twenty years. I wrote this essay to encourage and inspire my two teachers. I wanted them to know how thankful I am for their God-given talents. With the help of these two ladies and the Lord Jesus Christ, I've discovered my own talent and for that reason alone, I will always be thankful.

WAN-HE ZHANG (p. 29)

Honorable Mention Authors

Rogelio Abad
Hassan Ahmed
Cristina Baciu
Eugenia Badescu
Jacqueline Bailey
Kathy Baker
Consuelo Barlow
Hristo Baryakov
Eva Baryakova
Dyanna Benjamin
Crystal G. Bentley
Kenneth Blackburn
Nokhim Blyumkin
Wanda Bogdanowicz
Mett Bogdanowicz
Amer Bokhari
Orsolya Boroczki
Tina Botts
Genis Branham
Geraldine Brown
Calvin E. Bryant
Rose M. Buckner
Francis Bukaczyk
Bobby Bunch
Michelle Bunn
Mari Cable
Giovanna E. Carrillo
Pedro Carrizal
Mi Chang
Anna Cherniuk
Nancy Clapper
Sumaya Claridge
Karen Cole
Chris Collins
Johnnell Dewberry
Souleymane Dieng
Erika Dillingham
Marlene Dixon
Vera Dunlap
Jenell Dusenberry
Jozsef Dzsula
Nahla Elbouazizi
Marija Erdelji
Larry Esselman
Sherri Floyd
Sherri Flynn
Adam Forist
Diane Freeman
Michelle Glick
Yuriy Gomma
Aaron Grimm
Tsylya Gurvich
Scott Hall
Tina Hammons
Geneva Hampton
Karen Hansen
Irina Hara
Patricia Harrah
Mechelle Harrison
Autaum Hill

Ragiye Ibragimova
Cynthia Renee Isaac
Diandra Jackson
Roberta Jasper
Keyonna Jennings
Roubir E. Jesri
Tonia Jones
Lakisha Jones
Bo Kyoung Kang
Jamale Kaynouz
Tina Kelly
Vincalita Ketcham
Kum Sun Kim
Hasan Kodra
Yelena Kosterova
Mariya Kotsyuba
Blair Kugele
Sagat Kushkumbaev
Bernadeta Kwiatkowski
Edmund Laskos
Shaunda Levy
Lonnie Littleton
Ken Long
Monica Lorenzo
Khiem Luc
Denise Lucas
Cheryl Lunsford
Hiep Ly
Elena Mashintseva
Arthur Massengill
Anna Mata
Heather Matson
Mirna Mazariegos
Rosalba McCain
Kaye McClain
Tamara McCloud
Andrew M. McFadden
Kellie McSkimming
Rodrigo Miranda
Laurie Mickovsky
Brian Mosher
Renate Mueller
Piret Murray
Victoria Murrell
Renee Myers
Nay Win Myint
Fetheia Nasser
Mamadou Ndiaye
Anh Phuong Nguyen
Aleksandr F. Oleynikov
Teresa Ostronski
Lesya Ozeruga
Salvatore Padula
Martha Palencar
Gabrielle Parker
Felicia Pasco
Viktor Pendrak
Ivy Pennywitt
Xia Li Perantoni
Ebony Perkins
Maxine Perkins
Linda Perry
Deborah J. Phillippi
Lynda S. Pickett
Danuta Pietrzycka
Maria Pineiro
Maria Popa
Roxanne Porter
Deena Preston
Valerie Puckett
Liliana Ramirez
Jana Reighard
Lori Renick
Lev Reyzis

Aaron Robbins
Renee Russell
Elizabeth Sacksith
Sean Satterwhite
Kumiko Sawai
Debbie Shepherd
Monique Simon
Zofia Skrodzki
Kevin L. Smith
Susan Sokol
Vicki Starcher
Ryan Stephans
Latosha M. Stokes
Stephen Strawser
Sandra Sullivan
Suzanna K. Tejeda
Maria Thomas
Clyde Thompson
Mary Elizabeth Thompson
Heather Tipton
Pam Tolley
Kim Hai Tran
Dan Trumble
Klara Trusova
Linda Walker
Mittie Walker
Robert Wells
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